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THE

# GOSPEL EXHIBITED

IN A

# UNITARIAN MINISTER'S PREACHING.

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By GEORGE R. NOYES.

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# THE GOSPEL EXHIBITED.

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1 Cor. ix. 16. Yea, wo is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel.

On the recurrence of the anniversary of the interesting period, when I was set apart, by the solemnities of ordination, to be a preacher of the glorious gospel of the blessed God to you, the people of my charge, it is natural for us to look back upon the ground we have gone over. It is well for me to consider the manner in which I have discharged my duties, and for you to consider what improvement you have made under the advantages which you have enjoyed. I have felt myself impelled not only by inclination, but by a sense of duty, to reflect upon what I have done, and what I have left undone during the past year, for the religious improvements of the souls for whom it is my privilege to labor; to consider what parts of my duty I may have neglected, or discharged with remissness; and what methods remain to be tried for the promotion of the temporal and everlasting welfare of this people.

The result of my meditations on the diligence and fidelity, or the contrary, with which I may have discharged my duties, it would neither be proper nor useful for

me to lay before you. The reflections, which have occurred to me, must be laid up in my own mind for my own use. I have abundant reason to humble myself before that omniscient One, to whom I am accountable; but it would be of no use to make my confessions to the ears of man.

But one part of the reflections, to which the anniversary of my ordination has naturally led me, may form a profitable subject of discourse to you at this time. I have been led to take a survey of the substance of the doctrines, which I have endeavored to illustrate and enforce. By an exhibition of a summary view of what have been the doctrines and duties, to which I have invited your attention, you, as well as myself, will be able more easily to perceive whether I have rightly divided the word of truth; whether I have declared to you the whole counsel of God; or whether I have subjected myself to the wo incurred by those, who, in contradiction to their obligations and professions, preach not the gospel. The subject of discourse, then, will be, a summary view of the doctrines and duties of the gospel, as understood by me, and as I suppose, by most of the denomination, to which I belong.

I. The foundation of all religion, and that which gives a complexion to all its parts, is the nature and character of God. In respect to this, it has been my object to deepen in your minds the conviction of the existence of one God, of infinite power, wisdom, goodness, justice, and mercy, and the existence of but one God. I have endeavored to show that all the appearances of nature, all that we can see in the heavens above or the earth beneath, may be accounted for upon the supposition of the exist-

ence of a single Infinite Mind; that nothing less will account for the existence of the universe; and that anything more is inconsistent with that unity of design, which is stamped upon all the works of creation.

I have endeavored to show that this doctrine of the perfect unity of God is sanctioned by revelation as well as proclaimed by the works of nature; and I have endeavored to defend the doctrine from whatever appeared to me to be inconsistent with it. In particular I have endeavored to show that the doctrine of the Trinity, so called, is subversive of the unity of God, and wholly at war with the Scriptures. This doctrine teaches that there are three distinct agents, each of which is God Supreme. Each of these agents is said to have his own particular will, and to perform different parts in man's redemption and salvation, neither doing the work of the other. Now to assert, that each of three such intelligent agents is God Supreme, appears to me to be the same thing as to assert that there are three Gods. I do not mean to charge Trinitarians with holding a belief in three Gods. I know not what subtile distinctions their minds can make; nor what idea of unity they have, when they say that three intelligent agents, each of which is God, make together but one God. I only say that the proposition, There are three intelligent agents, each of which is God Supreme, and the proposition, There are three Gods, appear to my mind to be synonymous.

In consequence of what has been said of our denomination, it is necessary to state, that we believe in the Father, and in the Son, and in the holy spirit. But to believe that these three are one and the same being, is quite a different thing. Baptism has sometimes been

represented as an act of worship; but very erroneously. "Know ye not," says the Apostle, "that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" Is then the death of Christ an object of worship? Of the children of Israel, too, it is said, "They were baptized into Moses." But was Moses the object of their religious worship? St Paul asks, "Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" But did he mean to ask whether he had been worshipped by the Corinthian converts?

Baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and holy spirit, is a profession of faith or belief in the Father, who raised up Jesus to be our teacher and Saviour, in the Son or Messiah, who finished the work which was given him to do by the Father who sent him, and in the holy spirit, which was shed abundantly upon the Apostles, and which is now given to those, who ask the Father for it.

The apostolic benediction, "May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the holy spirit be with you all," has sometimes been quoted in support of the Trinity. But does this verse declare that God, and Jesus Christ, and the holy spirit are one and the same being, or that each of them is God? No. Neither is this benediction properly an act of worship; but rather a benevolent wish, an aspiration. If, however, any prefer to regard it as a prayer, it is a prayer to the Father of all. The grace of Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the holy spirit, are the subjects, not the objects, of the petition. They are prayed *for*, not prayed *to*. The following form of expression, "May the blessing of God, and the favor of good men, be your portion," makes good men objects of

worship as much as the apostolic benediction makes Jesus the object of supreme worship. The phrase, "May the communion of the holy spirit be with you," means, May a participation of the holy spirit be with you; i. e. May you partake of spiritual influences.

I will here remark that if it could be proved that the Apostles did ask of Jesus such aid as they thought he could afford them, it would by no means follow, that they regarded him as God. When Jesus was just about to leave them, he said "*I will ask the Father*, and he will give you another comforter;" thus implying that his power to help them would be by intercession with his Father, to whom he was going, and who was greater than he. The Roman Catholics pray to the Virgin Mary and to the saints. This does not prove that they regard them as gods.

In opposition to the doctrine of the Trinity, Unitarians maintain that the only true God and the only proper object of religious worship is the Father, "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."* The following declarations of Jesus, and his Apostles, seem to furnish ample support to the doctrine which I maintain. "And this is life eternal that they might know *Thee, the only true God*, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."† "*One Lord*, one faith, one baptism, *one God and Father of all*, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."‡ "But to us there is but *one God, the Father*, of whom are all things, and we in him; and *one Lord* Jesus Christ, by whom are all things [i. e. relating to the christian religion] and we by him."|| "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ

* Ephesians i. 3. † John xvii. 3. ‡ Ephesians iv. 5. 6.
|| 1 Corinthians viii. 6.

Jesus."* "Denying the only Lord God, *and* our Lord Jesus Christ."† "In that day ye shall ask *me* nothing. Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father *in my name*, he will give it you."‡ "My Father is greater than I."§ "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."‖ Of these two last passages it is, indeed, said, that Jesus uttered them concerning his *human nature*. But the Scriptures nowhere teach us that Jesus had more natures than one, and Jesus made no qualification, when he made the above assertion. No Unitarian teaches the dependence of Jesus in a more unqualified manner than he declared it. In order to understand in what sense he denied a knowledge of the day and the hour in the verse above quoted, let it be considered in what sense the disciples proposed the question. When, full of anxiety, they came to him with the entreaty, "Tell us, when shall these things be?" did they suppose that they were applying to him in his merely human capacity? Or did they suppose that they applied to him in his highest capacity? Certainly they could have expected a knowledge of future events only from the latter. Unless therefore Jesus meant to deceive his disciples, he intended to deny that he knew the day and the hour, in his highest capacity.

II. Jesus Christ I have always represented as a being clothed with the most exalted powers, possessing a character worthy of our admiration and love, sustaining towards us the most interesting relations, and performing for us the most important offices. I have represented

* 1 Timothy ii. 5. † Jude 4. ‡ John xvi. 23.
§ John xiv. 28. ‖ Mark xiii. 32.

him as the Son of God, "the mediator between God and man." * I have claimed for his precepts, the authority of commands of God; for his doctrines, the authority of the words of God. I have represented him as deserving a place in your hearts, inferior only to that of his Father and our Father, of his God and our God. I have represented him as deriving his fulness of power and wisdom from the Father; according to the declaration of Scripture, "*It pleased the Father* that in him should all fulness dwell." † This verse affords a key, by which all the titles, attributes, and actions which are ascribed to Jesus in the Bible, may be explained in perfect consistency with the infinite superiority of his Father, whom he himself acknowledged as the giver of all his qualifications.‡ I have also represented him as a Saviour of the world by the appointment of the Father; according to the Scripture, "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince and a saviour."§ I have also represented him as the judge of the world by the appointment of the Father, according to the declaration, "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ." || In a word, I have ever represented Jesus as possessing all the qualifications to render him an infallible guide, a glorious redeemer, an all-sufficient Saviour, and an impartial judge; but yet as having *received* all these qualifications from his Father and our Father, his God and our God; according to his own declaration, "All power is *given* unto me in heaven and in earth." ¶ He possessed them not from eternity;

* 1 Tim. ii. 5. † Coloss. i. 19. ‡ John v. 19, 30.
§ Acts v. 31. || Rom. ii. 16. Acts x. 42. xvii. 31.
¶ Matt. xxviii. 18. Comp. Col. i. 19. John iii. 34, 35. v. 19, 30. Acts ii. 22. Rev. i. 1.

not until they were given him. Exalt the Saviour as high as you will, he that bestowed all his glory upon him, must be still higher. The qualifications which I have ascribed to Christ are often termed his divinity; and in this sense of the term, I have ever strenuously maintained the divinity of Christ.

III. The Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit, or Spirit of God, I have represented as the influence, energy, or mind of God, and no more a distinct person from God, than the spirit of a man, is a distinct person from the man.* The Supreme Being is often represented as "pouring out his spirit," † "shedding it abundantly,"‡ &c, and Christians are said to be "partakers of the holy ghost;"§ language inconsistent with the personality of the spirit. The Scriptures never represent the holy spirit as an object of love or adoration. In many passages we are required to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, to love the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, in sincerity, but never to love the holy ghost. The reason can be no other, than what I have stated, viz. that the holy spirit, or spirit of God, either denotes God himself, without distinction of person, or the influence and energy of God. Hence we are required to pray to God *for* the spirit, never to pray *to* it. The language of the Bible is, not that the spirit listens to prayer, but that "God will give his holy spirit to them that ask him."||

The preceding view of the divine spirit is the same that was held by the pious Dr Watts. From an ample illustration of the subject by him, I quote the following passages:

* 1 Cor. ii. 11. † Acts ii. 17. ‡ Titus iii. 6.
§ Heb. vi. 4. || Luke xi. 13.

"And indeed if the Holy Spirit were really a true and proper person, it would be as difficult to account for all these, and many more expressions in Scripture, which cannot properly be ascribed to a proper person; and if in some places these *impersonal expressions*, or in other places the personal expressions, must be figurative, why may not my explanation of them do as well as the contrary? And thus the Spirit of God need not anywhere be construed into a real, proper, distinct person."

"Yet let it be remembered, (as is said before) that even in some of these impersonal senses it may be sometimes represented as performing personal actions, according to the Hebrew idiom; as Wisdom, the Law, the Scripture, Righteousness, Sin, Death, and many other things, are described as persons. So 'the anointing teacheth us all things,' 1 John ii. 27. 'The spirit lusteth against the flesh,' Gal. v. 17.

"But I know not any place of Scripture, which requires us to make express personal addresses, either of prayer or of praise, unto the Spirit, as we are taught to do to the Father, and to the Son; nor can I find where we are required to fear him, or to adore him as God, or to trust in him, or so much as to follow after the knowledge of him; but for these benefits which we receive from him, we are directed by precepts or examples in Scripture to address or pray to the Father or the Son, Luke xi. 13, Rom. xv. 13, John xv. 26, but not to the Spirit himself.

"There are many Christians, indeed, who cannot suppose that several texts of Scripture can be explained by the Spirit of God, considered as an essential power or principle in the Godhead, because the Spirit of God is always represented as ministering to God, or to Jesus

Christ, as sent by both the Father and the Son, on all his messages, and seems to be distinguished from them as another person in the form of baptism, and in 1 John v. 7, where three bear record in heaven, and in other scriptures.

"But we must remember that not only the Hebrew tongue, but almost all languages represent many things in a personal manner, which are not real persons: such as Life, Death, Virtue, Time, Fate, Nature, Providence, Conscience, Appetite, &c. And we say, God and his Spirit, as well as we say God and his Providence, God and Nature do this, or that.

"It is objected also, that the Spirit of God is sometimes represented in a lower character, as a mere messenger, John xvi. 13. 'When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, &c.'

"But we should consider, that though the Spirit of God itself, or the divine principle of knowledge and power in the Godhead, cannot be so properly represented in a lower character, yet the influences and operations, the gifts or effects, of the Spirit of God, which are often called the Spirit, may be said to be sent, conveyed, or bestowed upon men; and that even not only by God the Father, or by Jesus Christ, but also by the hands of the Apostles. Peter and John laid their hands on the Samaritans, and they received the Holy Spirit. Acts viii. 17." *

IV. There is no doctrine, which I have been more

* Watts's Faithful Enquiry, &c. p. 30—35.

anxious to impress upon your minds, than that of the paternal character of God. I have endeavored to represent him as not only in name, but in reality, the Father of his creatures. I have endeavored to show that the principles of his government, his purposes, and designs respecting men, his requirements and prohibitions, and his present and future treatment of them, are consistent with the character of a father. I have represented him as our Father by the gift and preservation of our bodies and our souls; our Father by his care for our temporal enjoyments; our Father by the reasonableness and equity of his laws; our Father by imposing upon his children no useless restraints and austerities; by laying upon them no greater burden than their strength will bear; by requiring no more of them than he hath given them ability to perform; our Father by his disposition to pardon a penitent offender without money and without price — without any other inducement than his own eternal mercy; our Father in the gracious plans he has adopted for the reformation and salvation of sinners, particularly in so loving the world as "to send his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him;" our Father in his corrections and chastisements in this world, and in the punishments he has threatened in another; our Father in the promise he has given "to help the infirmities" of those who ask his spiritual aid; and our Father in the unspeakable rewards which he has promised to those who seek them by patient continuance in well-doing.

By unfolding and illustrating the preceding representation of the paternal character of God, I have endeavored to draw you to him by cords of love, rather than

to drive you by images of terror; to melt your hearts by his mercies, rather than to break them by his judgments; to induce you to render him the cheerful obedience of children, rather than the constrained submission of slaves. For nothing are we more indebted to Jesus than for this; that by his declarations, his parables, his disposition and his example, *He has shown us the Father.*

It has been my purpose in the course of my ministry to establish in your minds what I believe to be the truths of the gospel, rather than expressly to oppose prevalent errors. There are three doctrines, however, which I have felt myself bound to oppose as inconsistent with the precious doctrine of the paternal character of God, and as wholly unsupported by the inspired teachers. These are the doctrines of unconditional personal election, of total native depravity, and of substituted or vicarious punishment, in all the various shapes which it has assumed.

1. The doctrine of unconditional personal election, in the mildest form of it, teaches that before the foundation of the world, God, from his mere good pleasure, foreordained or appointed certain individuals of the human family to the enjoyment of eternal happiness, uninfluenced to such a choice by any foresight of their future characters; while from the same good pleasure he determined to withhold his saving mercy from others, to pass them by, and to ordain them to eternal wrath for their sins. This doctrine, instead of magnifying the grace of God, seems to me to change it into partiality and caprice; and to be suited to make men easy in the neglect of strenuous efforts, and the appointed means for obtaining salvation. For if the crown of victory has been determined ten thousand ages before the contest, to be

bestowed upon certain individuals, and to be withheld from others, why should I labor in vain, and spend my strength for nought, in running the christian race? If I am one of those fortunate individuals, I shall receive the crown; if I am not one, I shall not receive it. For who can annul a decree of the Almighty?

You tell me, indeed, that God is merciful; that Jesus has died for all; that heaven and hell are presented to my choice. But of what avail is all this, if God has passed an irresistible decree that heaven shall be the portion of a definite number of individuals, and of no others? Is this consistent with the character of him, who invites "every one that thirsteth, to come, and drink of the waters of life freely;"* who hath promised "to render to every man according to his deeds,"† and, above all, who hath assumed towards his creatures the endearing appellation of *Father*? I appeal to your own hearts, ye fathers! Yea, where is the father or the mother that would treat a family of children in the manner which is ascribed to our Father in heaven?

2. Another doctrine which I have felt myself bound to oppose, as inconsistent with the paternal character of God, is that of the total native depravity of man. According to this doctrine, all mankind come into the world with a nature entirely depraved and corrupt, wholly opposed to all that is spiritually good, and inclined to all that is evil, morally incapable of any holy exercise, until they receive a *special* influence from God, which may, or may not be afforded; or which is afforded to some and withheld from others; and those, from whom this special

* Isa. lv. i. † Rom. ii. 6.

influence is withheld are doomed to everlasting wo, for the sins which they commit, while acting according to their nature. I have maintained, and still maintain, that the cruelty implied in this doctrine is as great, as if the Supreme Being should torture the lion of the forest, or the eagle of the air, for seizing and devouring their prey. It represents our Creator as guilty of conduct that would disgrace an Egyptian taskmaster, and exactly the reverse of what might be expected from a kind and merciful father.

In opposition to this doctrine I have maintained that man is by nature, or in consequence of his natural birth, neither holy, nor unholy, but capable of becoming either by the use or abuse of his power of choosing between good and evil; by the right or wrong application of his faculties; and by the restraint, or indulgence, and the direction, or misdirection of affections, which are a part of his nature. What I have maintained may, I think, be expressed in the language of Scripture; "God made man" i. e. mankind, "upright" or innocent; "but *they* have sought out many inventions."*

In a loose and popular sense it may indeed be said that men are naturally inclined to sin; but not even in this sense, that they are *totally* inclined to sin. I apprehend that it is in a very loose sense that the majority of those who are not professed theologians, assent to the doctrine of native depravity. If by a natural inclination to sin it be meant that men are prone to indulge to excess certain natural appetites, desires, and passions, which are good in themselves, and even necessary to our

* Eccl. vii. 29.

very existence, preservation, and happiness, then I am a believer in the doctrine. For the appetite for food, for drink, and for the gratification of other of the senses, unless restrained by reason, conscience and religion, degenerates into gluttony, drunkenness, lust, and sensuality. So the desire of esteem, of power, and of property, which are essential principles of our nature, degenerate into criminal vanity, ambition and avarice.

Each of these desires may be directed to right or wrong objects and ends. The desire of the esteem of God, of Jesus, and of good men, is right. The desire of power, as a means of greater usefulness, is right, as also the desire of property. The passion of anger is a principle of our nature. It is a good principle. One may "be angry and sin not." When excited by a just cause, and exercised in due degree, it often proves an armor of defence to the weak, when cool reason would be timid and inactive. But this passion indulged to excess, and unrestrained by reason, conscience, and religion, becomes hatred, malice, revenge, and murder.

If therefore, by natural depravity, it be meant, that we have by nature appetites, desires, and passions, which are very liable to be indulged to excess, and to be fixed upon, or confined to, wrong objects, then I am a believer in natural depravity.

But let it be remembered, that in order that we may be able to restrain and regulate these natural appetites, desires, and affections, and to fix them upon proper objects, we have within us what may be called our better nature; what the Apostle Paul calls "the law of our minds."*

* Rom. vii. 23.

We have by nature, reason, conscience, a love of spiritual excellence, a susceptibility of religious impression, a capacity of fixing our thoughts and affections upon God, of loving him as soon as his lovely character is fairly and fully presented to our minds, and of being influenced by all the hopes, fears, and encouragements, which natural and revealed religion present to our view. We have also the promised aid of the Divine Spirit to help our infirmities.

It is, therefore, evident that we are morally, as well as physically, capable of becoming holy, as well as of becoming wicked; that sin is the abuse of our nature; that "the law of our mind" is as natural as "the law of our members;" that it is as unnatural, as it is ungrateful and wicked, to withhold our love from our Father in heaven. It is true, however, that our appetites and desires, the lower part of our nature, are exercised and developed at an earlier period, than our reason and conscience, and at a period when the mind can only very imperfectly comprehend the peculiar objects of religion. Thus, owing to the nature of the case, and the imperfection of early education, the lower principles of our nature have usually gained undue strength before reason and conscience and the capacity of religion have come to maturity. Hence the necessity of the christian warfare. Hence all are included under sin, and must, in a greater or less degree, repent and be converted.

The views, which I have given of our nature seem to me not only more honorable to God, but better adapted to promote repentance and humility in man, than the opposite views. The higher opinion you give men of their nature, the more will they be humbled at what they have

made themselves by their own choice; by their voluntary transgressions of the law. With such views of his nature every sinner may feel the force of the address of Jehovah to Israel; "Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed; why then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?"*

3. Another doctrine, which I have felt bound to oppose, as inconsistent with the paternal character of God, is that of vicarious or substituted punishment; i. e. punishment borne by one, who did not commit the crime, in place of those that did. This doctrine teaches that God could not, consistently with his honor and the principles of his government, forgive sinners without inflicting their punishment, the penalty incurred by them for their sins, upon an innocent person. It teaches, also, that the sufferings of Jesus, inflicted by Jewish malice, and naturally arising from the circumstances in which he was placed, were not all that he was obliged to endure. It teaches — O my merciful father, what have not men imputed to thee! — that, when the cup of Jewish malice was exhausted, then Almighty power interposed to inflict additional misery upon that innocent head; and this, they tell us, for the purpose of convincing men that God is just!

In opposition to such views I have maintained the free, unpurchased, unmerited grace of God. The language of the prophet Ezekiel, and similar language throughout the Bible, give me a better ground of hope than any of the artificial, heartless theories of which punishment by substitute is the basis. "When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do

* Jer. ii. 21.

that, which is lawful and right; if the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he hath robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live."*

The doctrine of punishment by substitute, as it has been exhibited by most Calvinistic writers since the days of Calvin, appears to be inconsistent with the doctrine of future punishment. For if the punishment has been once borne, and the full penalty of the sins of all mankind endured by a substitute, with what justice could this punishment be inflicted upon the offenders themselves, penitent, or impenitent?

This doctrine seems also to be inconsistent with the pardoning mercy of God. For is it not an abuse of language to say that one has pardoned an offence, when he has received from a substitute all that strict justice could claim from the offender?

The theory of punishment by substitute, in every form of it, I have endeavored to prove to be inconsistent with the character of a wise and righteous moral governor. No earthly ruler, unless in a barbarous age, ever acted on this principle. That it is inconsistent with the character of God as a father, I appeal to the heart of every parent now present. If some of your children, having committed an offence, or many offences, should become penitent, fall down on their knees, and ask your forgiveness, would you say to them, I cannot, consistently with my authority as a parent, forgive you, unless my elder, my first-born son

* Ezek. xxxiii. 14—16.

shall bear the punishment, which you have deserved? The prodigal son, in the parable, heard no such language from his father.*

Besides, does not common sense decide that the assertion, that Jesus bore the penalty, or punishment due to our sins, is as contrary to plain matter of fact, as the assertion that bread and wine after consecration become real flesh and blood? When we consider that, not having a guilty conscience, Jesus could not have a sense of the divine disapprobation or displeasure, on account of his sins; that he could not feel that he had brought his sufferings upon himself by his misconduct; that angels came from God to strengthen him in the midst of his sufferings; and that he knew that within a very short time he was to be received to the right hand of his Father, how absolutely contrary to matter of fact is the assertion that Jesus suffered the penalty or punishment, threatened for the sins of a single man, much less of the whole world. I put the question to the common sense of any man, who has given up the idea of a punishment by material fire (and I understand this to be the case with the Orthodox generally), What idea can you form of future punishment, if you exclude from it the idea of a sense of guilt, remorse of conscience, a sense of the displeasure of God for your sins, and include in it the reception of aid and comfort sent from God by his angels, the thought that your sufferings are owing to no fault of your own, and the sure hope of speedily exchanging your sufferings for infinite and eternal happiness?

But what is meant by the Scripture assertion, that

* Luke, ch. xv.

Christ "bore our sins"? The meaning is, that he suffered and died in order to save us from our sins. St Matthew, after recording the many miracles, which Jesus performed on a certain occasion, tells us that these things were done, "that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, — Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." If then Christ might bear our sicknesses by exercising a benevolent sympathy and his power of healing, why not bear our sins by benevolent labors and sufferings to redeem us from all iniquity? I see no more evidence that in bearing our sins, he bore our punishment, than that in bearing our sicknesses, he suffered all the pains and distresses, of which he relieved others.

But what is the meaning of the verse, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." I answer, that it appears from the context, that by the curse of the law, is meant the temporal penalties of the Mosaic law, such as being stoned to death for violating the Sabbath, being excommunicated for omission of circumcision, &c, and not the punishment due to sinners in the future world; and that by Jesus "being made a curse for us," is meant that he was "treated *by men*, as a violator of the law; as if he had committed a crime worthy of death and of the wrath of God." It appears from Deut. xxi. 23, to which the Apostle alludes, that one, who suffered an ignominious death like that of crucifixion, was said by the Jews to be accursed of God. To "be a curse for us" means therefore the same thing as to be crucified for us, i. e. for our benefit.

By wicked hands was Jesus crucified and slain. He was never punished, or tortured by God. When he utter-

ed the prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," he seems not to have suspected that his severest agony came directly from that Father, to whom he prayed.

What, then, it may be asked is the meaning of the language, "It pleased the Lord to bruise him?" I answer, nothing is plainer to one who will compare one Scripture expression with another. In the Scriptures, God is frequently said *to do* what takes place in the course of divine providence, *or what he permits to be done.* Thus he hardened Pharaoh's heart. Thus, also it is said, "He bruiseth, and bindeth up." So the Apostle Paul says, "God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death." He did not, however, believe that his reproaches and sufferings were the direct infliction of God. It is true that the divine purpose was fulfilled and not disappointed by the sufferings of Christ; and so it is by the sufferings of all good men. It does not follow, however, that the sufferings of Jesus, or the sufferings of good men for conscience' sake are directly inflicted by God, or that they receive torment from him, in addition to what they receive from the hands of men. It was the will of God that the Jews should reverence his Son, that they should believe on him, and be made happy by him. His commands and his invitations through Jesus were all sincere, although it pleased him to make the sufferings and death of Jesus, which he permitted the Jews to inflict upon him, a powerful means of redeeming and saving the world. It is exactly in the Hebrew idiom to speak of what Divine Providence permitted Jesus to endure, in the language, "It pleased the Lord to bruise him."

Still it is a great truth that Jesus died for sinners; that he died "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God."* But the meaning of this language is that he died *for our benefit*, not that he died *in our stead*. He died to reconcile man to God, not to reconcile God to man. This is the Scripture doctrine of atonement. "All things are of God," says the Apostle, "who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ."† And reconciliation is atonement. The same Greek word, which is translated *atonement* once only in the New Testament, is elsewhere translated *reconciliation*.

He died that we might live. His death was an important means of giving spiritual life to the world. It has been the means of turning an innumerable company from darkness to light; from the dominion of sin to the empire of religious principle, and Christian holiness. By being "lifted up" he has drawn multitudes to him, as their guide and Saviour.

The great consequence of his death, connected with the events subsequent to it, has been the establishment of his religion in the world, the triumph of Christianity over Jewish unbelief and Gentile superstition. In the scheme of the divine providence, it was important that the Messiah should suffer and taste of death, that he might establish his religion upon the most solid foundation, engage the affections of men in it, and give interest and efficacy to the great truths which he taught, and to the precepts, which he delivered during his life.

Perhaps it is not within the power of our limited faculties to comprehend all the reasons, which made it neces-

*1 Pet. iii. 18. †2. Cor. v. 18. See also Rom. v. 10.

sary that the Messiah should suffer and die. That it was necessary, we have the uniform testimony of the Scriptures. The general design of his sufferings is also stated with great plainness. "I, if I be lifted up," says he, "shall draw all men to me."* My death will exert an attractive influence upon the wayward hearts of men. "Who gave himself for us," says Paul, "that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."† It is worthy of particular notice, that it was not to redeem us from the vengeance of one, who could exercise no forgiveness, until the full penalty of justice without mercy was paid; it was not to quench the burning wrath of a hard and stern master, that Jesus gave himself for us. No. The language of the Apostle is express, that it was "to redeem us *from all iniquity*." In similar language says another Apostle, "Ye were not redeemed from your *vain conversation* by corruptible things, as silver and gold, but by the precious blood of Christ."‡ This is a very important point. We are prone to entertain the thought that Jesus suffered to save us from some distant evil; to redeem us from some outward calamity; and to purchase our freedom from a deserved penalty by taking it upon himself. But this is contrary to the passages which have been adduced from Scripture, and to others, which might be adduced. From them we learn, that Jesus gave himself for us that he might redeem us from something within our own hearts, viz. from all iniquity — that he might "save us from our sins,"§ redeem us from our vain conversation,

* John xii. 32. † Tit. ii. 14. ‡ 1 Pet. i. 18. § Mat. i. 21.

"purge our consciences from dead works,"* and draw us to him by cords of love. Depend upon it, my friends, Jesus is a Redeemer and Saviour to no one of us, only as we are induced, by the motives presented in his life, his death, and his instructions, to renounce our vain conversation, to lament and forsake our sins, and to depart from all iniquity. The true redemption, the genuine salvation is to be wrought within us by the exercise of our own free wills. It is the reconciliation of the soul to God. It is the exaltation of the fallen spirit from the depths of depravity. It is deliverance from the hell of a polluted heart and a torturing conscience. It is the establishment within the soul of the spirit of love to God and love to man. This is the true redemption. This is the only salvation, worthy of the name. To effect this glorious freedom and perfection of the soul Jesus lived and died; and he is glorified more and more in proportion as this object is accomplished.

But the question again recurs to your minds, How does the death of Jesus contribute to this renovation of the soul, this freedom from sin, this dominion of conscience, this reign of virtue and piety in the heart?

1. His death convinces us of his sincerity and truth, as a messenger from God. He sealed his testimony with his blood. "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world," says he to Pilate, "that I might *bear witness to the truth.*"† For the same end he died. "When ye have *lifted up* the son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things."‡

* Heb. ix. 14. † John xviii. 37. ‡ John viii. 28.

He would not renounce the work, which was given him to do, in order to save his life. He persevered in his declaration, that he was a teacher sent from God, that he was the promised Messiah, the inspired lawgiver, and future judge of the world, in the midst of ignominy and torture, when by retracting it, he might have received the homage of a nation. Had he been willing to abandon the object for which he was sent into the world, and to keep back the words of eternal life, and withhold his testimony to the truth, he needed not to have been suspended upon the cross. Had he complied with the wishes of those, who came to take him by force and make him king, he would have been the object of their enthusiastic attachment instead of their inveterate hatred; instead of curses he would have received shouts of applause; instead of "Crucify him, Crucify him," the popular cry would have been, "Hosanna to the Son of David;" instead of the crown of thorns, he would have received the royal diadem; and instead of being nailed upon the ignominious cross, he might have been securely elevated upon the throne of Judea. But such was his respect for his Father's will, that he chose to suffer rather than disregard it; such was his fidelity to his high commission of enlightening and saving the world, that he chose to die rather than abandon it; such was his love for men, that he chose to be crucified rather than that they should perish in ignorance and unbelief. Now we can look to the cross, and know that we repose our faith in an innocent, a disinterested, a faithful and true witness, who poured out his life-blood to seal the new covenant, which he brought, and assure us of its validity. His blood is the witness to us of his sincerity, the broad seal of the truth of all his

declarations, and consequently an important ground of our faith in the divinity of his religion, the obligation of his precepts, and the certainty of the rewards and punishments, proposed by him as the sanctions of duty. If, then, purity of heart is the result of such a faith, it is also the result of that which gives strength and assurance to this faith, i. e. of the death of Jesus.

2. His death was necessary as a preparatory step to that most convincing proof of the truth of his religion, which was afforded by his resurrection from the dead. This glorious event has ever been the chief corner stone, on which the truth of Christianity has rested. By it "he was shown to be the Son of God with power."* In allusion to this design of his death, he himself said, "I lay down my life, that I may take it again."† If then his resurrection was so essential, his death was also necessary as a preparatory step to it.

3. The death of Jesus was necessary to give efficacy and power to his religion, not merely by convincing the understanding of its truth, but by engaging our affections in its favor, by drawing to it our attention, and interesting our hearts in it. Our affections fix themselves upon persons rather than upon abstract truths. We attend with much greater interest to the lesson, when we love the teacher. Now the unexampled love of Jesus in laying down his life for us takes hold of the affections, subdues the soul to love, and awakens an inclination to pay a cheerful attention to his instructions, and a willing obedience to his commands. At the foot of the cross the hearts of thousands have been melted into contrition, penitence,

* Rom. i. 4. † John x. 17.

and love. They have witnessed the agony endured for their sakes, while they were yet sinners, endured too with such willingness and resignation, with such meekness and forgiveness, and their hearts have been captivated with the beauty of holiness. They have looked upon him, whose hands were torn by nails, whose feet were lacerated by thongs, and whose side was pierced with the spear to save them from their sins, and their souls have been affected. From each one of his wounds a voice of melting persuasion has been heard. They have resolved to do something to effect the object for which the Saviour died. They have resolved not to suffer their souls to be polluted with sin, to redeem them from which the Son of God poured out his blood like water. They have become ashamed of those iniquities, which cost the Redeemer his mortal agonies; they have abandoned them at the foot of the cross, and resolved that with respect to themselves the Redeemer should not die in vain. They have been led to crucify their baser passions and evil habits. "They have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the lamb."* In this way the death of Christ has had a glorious effect in imparting efficacy and power to his instructions, his precepts, and his example. The Son of man has been glorified by it. Thousands have gratefully adopted the fervent language of the Apostle, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified to me, and I to the world," i. e. in view of which, the sinful world loses all its attractions for me, and I lose all taste for the sinful pleasures of the world.

* Rev. vii. 14.

By opposing the doctrine of unconditional election, of total depravity, and of punishment by substitute, I have endeavored to magnify the grace of God. To exalt human merit has been the thing farthest from my heart. It has ever appeared to me the greatest absurdity in the world to suppose that any human being can merit eternal happiness. We do not merit the enjoyments we have in this world; much less an eternal life of happiness. We owe our Lord ten thousand talents and we have nothing wherewith to pay. But such is his abundant mercy, that he freely forgives the debt upon certain conditions, or to those who have certain qualifications. These conditions or qualifications are faith, repentance, and a new life. Not that these have any merit in them to deserve the remission of so great a debt, but that God is so infinitely merciful as to give the promise of eternal life upon such gracious conditions. If some indulgent father should promise his son a splendid fortune upon the condition of his performing the labor of a single day, the son would expect the performance of the promise upon the fulfilment of the condition. But he would not pretend that he had merited this fortune. Nor would he have the lower opinion of the generosity of his father, because so much work was required of him as the condition of its bestowment. Now the generosity of such an earthly parent is but a faint image of the exceeding mercy of our Father in heaven in promising eternal life to the penitent Christian, who patiently continues in well-doing. It is rich, unmerited, amazing mercy. We disclaim, therefore, every pretension to merit. We rely not upon an arm of flesh for our salvation. We trust to the free, impartial, unpurchased mercy of the everlasting Father, prom-

ised to those, who believe, repent, and obey the gospel, by Jesus Christ. In vain will you search through the universe for a better foundation than this.

V. I have represented mankind as capable, but frail; able to stand, but prone to fall, and therefore bound to seek and pray for that aid of the spirit, which is promised to them that ask for it. All spiritual aid, however, I have represented to be as capable of being resisted as the influence of parental instruction, of a sermon, or of a providential dispensation. "Ye do always resist the holy spirit,"* says St Stephen. I have also represented this spiritual aid, as bestowed upon all, as impartially as the light of the sun, or the rain of heaven, which bring to maturity an abundant harvest for him, who prepares the soil and sows the seed in season, but which will not prevent him, who sits folding his hands in seed-time, from starving in harvest.

VI. Regeneration I have represented as a doctrine of the gospel, applicable in a peculiar and emphatic sense to the first converts from Judaism and Heathenism, and in an important sense to men at the present day. It denotes that great spiritual change, experienced by one, who passes from ignorance, unbelief, or indifferent belief, and sin, to an enlightened, and hearty faith, and the holiness of heart and life required by the gospel. It is a figurative expression, the full meaning of which is expressed in the literal terms faith, repentance, a pure heart, and a holy life; in one word the acquisition of the christian

* Acts, vii. 51.

character. Whoever has acquired a sincere faith in Christ, and whose faith purifies his heart and influences his life, he is born again in the Scripture sense; he is a new creature; he is the new man created in righteousness and true holiness, whether the acquisition be the gradual growth of religious education, or the fruit of more sudden impressions. He has spiritual endowments, which he did not receive at his natural birth. Especially when the unbelieving, or the thoughtless has received Jesus as his infallible guide and Saviour with a true and hearty faith; when the lover of pleasure has become a lover of God; when the proud has clothed himself with humility; when the passionate and revengeful has become meek and forgiving; when the unjust has learned sacredly to respect the rights of his neighbor, and made reparation and restitution for past injustice to the extent of his ability; when the selfish and avaricious has learned to open his heart and his hands to the claims of charity; when the sensualist is adorned with inward purity, and when the profane and irreligious has acquired the spirit of piety and of prayer — to say that such a one is a new man, born again, or regenerated, is to use no more than a very natural and intelligible expression. There is no mystery in the thought, or the language. But when it is asserted that this vast change of character is instantaneous, then indeed the mind is perplexed with an unfathomable mystery. Then we are presented with a phenomenon as unlike anything that takes place in the natural, or intellectual world, as light to darkness.

I have represented the acquisition of the christian character as generally gradual, the fruit of long-continued exertion and persevering prayer, admitting that some

instances do occur of very rapid transition from unbelief or indifferent belief and sin to true faith and christian excellence. I have maintained that our hope that we are Christians should be founded on our conscious possession of the christian dispositions and graces, and not on the time or the manner, in which we come to possess them; that it is a most dangerous mistake to make what we may have experienced at one particular time, perhaps at some distant period of our lives, the evidence of our possessing the christian character; that the only solid evidence, the only hope that will not make ashamed, must arise from the knowledge of what we are *now*, drawn from an impartial examination of the heart and survey of the life. "Hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." * "By their fruits ye shall know them." †

VII. I have maintained that none arrive at such a state of perfection in this world, as to be beyond the danger of falling away; that as Adam fell from a state of innocence, so true Christians may fall from a state of holiness; that as the wicked may turn from his sins, so "the righteous may turn away from his righteousness." ‡

VIII. I have maintained the doctrine of a righteous retribution; of rewards for the righteous and of punishment for the wicked, beyond the present life. This has always appeared to me a fundamental doctrine of Christianity. Take away the fear of punishment beyond the present life, and you take away a powerful curb upon the evil passions of men; you weaken one of the supports

* 1 John ii. 3. † Mat. vii. 20. ‡ Ezek. xviii. 24.

of human virtue, and you diminish the security of your property and your lives. It has not, however, been my delight to speak of the terrors of the Lord. I have endeavored in this respect to follow the course of the Saviour, and the Apostles, who make a very sparing use of terror in comparison with other motives, which they address to the minds of men; who promise more than they threaten; persuade more than they alarm; and who allure more than they drive. I believe that the fear of punishment never produced in the soul the genuine love of God; but it has often proved "the beginning of wisdom." It has arrested the attention of the careless, and prepared their souls for the influence of better motives; and it has proved a safeguard to the virtue of good men, under the pressure of strong temptation. The exact nature and duration of future punishment I have not considered as revealed in the Scriptures, and I have not attempted, in this respect to be wise beyond what is written.

I have thus endeavored to give you a brief summary of the doctrines, which I have maintained during the course of my ministry; doctrines, which I embraced after an anxious examination of the Scriptures, in opposition to the prejudices of a thorough religious education, and to the influence of beloved friends and benefactors; and in which I have been more confirmed in proportion as I have extended my acquaintance with the sacred volume; and which I shall continue to preach, until "new light shall break forth upon me from the word of God."

Time will not permit me to go into so full a review of the duties, which in my past discourses I have endeavored to illustrate and enforce. Of the general duties in-

cluded under the term regeneration, I have already spoken. I find upon examination that the love of God has been enjoined upon you as the primary duty of religion, and the foundation of all other duties; that the love of man has been inculcated as a fundamental duty in itself, and an essential evidence of our love to God. "For he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?" * I find that I have insisted much upon imitation of Jesus Christ; upon self-examination, self-government, and self-denial; upon forgiveness of injuries; upon candid and charitable judgment; upon the duty of exercising our reason in the discovery of divine truth; of exercising the right of private judgment, and allowing others to do the same; and upon the duty of resisting all human dominion over the conscience and faith. I have insisted much upon the importance of public worship, and of the ordinances of our religion, at the same time reminding you that mercy is better than sacrifice. I have earnestly inculcated the duty of prayer, especially, the prayer of the closet, as a main support of a life according to godliness. I have recommended a regular and constant performance of the common, every day duties of life, as a better test of the christian character, than those more formal and public acts, which attract the notice and receive the applause of men. I have insisted that deeds are better proofs of piety than words, and that talking Christians are much less worthy of our imitation than walking Christians.

I have endeavored to encourage a warm zeal in the concerns of religion, and at the same time to show the necessity of uniting with it knowledge, discretion, and

* 1 John. iv 20.

charity. I have warned you against the love of the world, and devotion to its pleasures, as most dangerous foes to the growth of christian principle in the soul; and especially against the abuse of God's gifts by intemperance and riot. I have reminded parents of their duties to their children, and children of their duties to their parents, and of the immense importance of forming early dispositions and habits of piety and virtue; and to all I have recommended a life of continual industry as the use of the talent, with which they are intrusted, and a defence against the force of temptation. That I may hereafter recommend with greater power and illustrate with greater clearness the same great doctrines and duties, will be the subject of my, and I trust, of your earnest prayer, and of my constant exertions.

And, may I not hope, my friends, that you will institute a careful self-examination, and ascertain what influence the truths and precepts, which you have heard, have had upon your souls; how far the seed of the Gospel has been cast into good ground, and how far you have been forgetful hearers and not doers of the word. God grant, that we all supply what is wanting, and correct what is wrong in ourselves both with respect to the duties of this house, and to the general duties of the christian life. May we thus be prepared to meet together at the judgment seat of him, before whom we must all stand, and there receive the welcome sentence, "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord."

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THE

# CHRISTIAN CHANGE.

DESCRIBED BY THE

# APOSTLE PETER.

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BY CONVERS FRANCIS.

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# THE CHRISTIAN CHANGE.

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Among the duties and trials which devolved upon the Apostles, there was no one perhaps more difficult than to make their converts realize the true nature of the change which Christianity required of them. Their own minds had been slow in coming into just views of their Master's kingdom; and now that he was gone from them, and the diffusion of the gospel was entrusted to their hands, they found in the cherished notions of their countrymen, the same kind of difficulties and obstacles, which they themselves had presented to the immediate efficacy of the teaching of Jesus Christ while they walked by his side, and listened to his voice as it spake of themes all new and strange to their ears. And here, as I have said, was one of the hardest labors of the Apostles in spreading Christianity. Persecution and bodily suffering they could endure; distress and privation they could submit to; toil and weariness they cheerfully took for their portion: but prejudices, old opinions, deeply settled feelings, and idle superstitions, were harder than all these to be met or overcome; inasmuch as it is more difficult to dislodge a difficulty that has its seat in the mind, than to

confront or subdue one which affects only outward circumstances.

These observations are made with reference to a passage in the writings of the Apostle Peter, on which I propose to offer a few plain comments and remarks. It is this: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently; being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever."*

Here, we observe, the Apostle addresses those to whom he writes, as "being purified by obeying the truth." Now in this, there is doubtless an allusion to a fond and foolish conceit, which the Jews entertained, of an efficacy in certain outward rites among the Mosaic institutions. A comparison is implied, drawn from the ablutions, as the washing of the body and of garments, which the ceremonial law enjoined on certain occasions. The Jews became so narrow in their views and rested so much in external things, as to ascribe a great religious importance or efficacy to these outward cleansings. Such poor notions as these the Apostle intended to rebuke in the passage now before us. "Seeing ye have purified yourselves" — How? by the lustral waters of the Mosaic ceremonies? do you think they would purify you? No: but "seeing ye have purified your souls *in obeying the truth*," that is, christian truth, — in receiving it to your hearts, and making it the sanctifier of your inward man. *This* is the true purification,—that which comes from the use of spiritual means, not that which you may imagine

* 1 Peter i. 22, 23.

to proceed from the practices prescribed, as forms or precautions, in the Mosaic law.

Again; the Apostle says — "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible." Here likewise is probably a reference to one of the pernicious mistakes prevalent among the people of Judea. It is well known, that they thought a great deal of being descended from ancestors whom they supposed to stand peculiarly high in the favor of God, especially the most distinguished of them, Abraham. The piety and merit of such a progenitor, they imagined, were reflected down or imputed to his posterity; so that they who were born of such a father had extraordinary claims on the favor of heaven, with but little, if any, regard to the personal qualifications of obedience and righteousness. Now this folly the sacred writer designates by calling it "being born of corruptible seed;" and in opposition to it he places the true christian pedigree, (if I may use the word in this figurative sense,) which consists in being born of "incorruptible seed," — that is, in coming into a new state of mind and heart, under the power of moral influences. The allusion and the contrast here are the same as in that passage in which those are described who "were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God,"* — and likewise as in our Saviour's declaration to Nicodemus — "that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit."† The empty boast of being a descendant from Abraham is contrasted with the substantial benefit, the true happiness,

* John i. 13. † John iii, 6.

of being born into a new moral life under the influence of the spirit of the Gospel.

Such are the allusions in the passage before us which seem to require explanation. I now proceed to offer a few remarks on the effect produced by Christianity on the character of man as described in these words of the Apostle.

1. It is described as a *purification, wrought by obedience to the truth.* It is no profession; it is no taking of a name upon ourselves; it is not that sort of zeal which satisfies itself with crying out, "Lord, Lord." No: it is a moral purifying; it is a washing away of the stains which sin and folly had imprinted on the heart; it is the cleansing of the temple of man's spirit, that it may be prepared for the presence and the service of God. So far asthis is done, the design of the gospel is accomplished in us. So far as this is not done, the design of the gospel fails; and it would have been almost as well for us individually, if Jesus Christ had never lived, or taught, or died, or rose from the dead. The purity here represented as the true effect of christian principles consists in giving a *religious* character to the thoughts, and motives, and feelings. Its demands will not be satisfied with simply abstaining from open or concealed iniquity; they will not be satisfied with that harmless sobriety of character which enables us to stand reputably with our fellow-men; nor will they be satisfied with an attendance, however exact, upon the forms in which Christianity is set forth to engage the attention and excite the interest of mankind. I fear very much, that with things like these, the most of us persuade ourselves to rest contented, and thus come far short of that standard which he who spake as man never spake lived

and died to establish. When in some hour of calm reflection, of searching self-examination, we take the matter seriously in hand, and consider what Christianity requires and what it purposes to accomplish, we must feel, we *do* feel, how very poor and defective are the approaches we make to a real acquaintance with its spirit. If we could but once know it as it is, and open our hearts, and make room for it, and take it there as it is, we should be like those who have left the chill and the darkness of a cavern, and have come out into the broad light and the cheerful warmth of day.

This purification consists, as I have said, in giving a *religious* character to the thoughts and feelings. And by this I mean, that it consists in binding the soul to God by all the holy ties of dependence, thankfulness, and obligation,— in causing the heart to feel habitually and naturally the presence of religious truth, just as we feel the sweet influences of the breeze that fans the cheek and keeps in motion the organs of life,— in linking fast to the mind the great considerations relating to the future and everlasting world, so that it can never long wander away from them. All this is doubtless effected but very imperfectly even in the best men; but in greater or less degrees it is and must be effected. They will have frequent occasion to lament the remains of corruption in their hearts: they will grieve for the unfaithfulness of their services, and for the uncleanness that still cleaves to their moral constitution. Yet they will bless God that the spirit of christian purity is not a stranger to their souls: and they will strive and pray that having found an entrance there, it may spread from one point to another, till the whole moral nature in a better world shall be sur-

rounded and embalmed by its influence. The mind of man may become what our Saviour found the temple at Jerusalem, — a den of thieves; and as he drove out those who profaned the holy place with their merchandize, so his religion may expel the corrupters of our moral nature, and make the spirit of man what God designed it to be,— a house of prayer,— that is, the residence of purity. When your thoughts and feelings turn to the great Father of light, as the needle points to the pole, however it may by constraint be turned aside, and when your life bears witness that the presence of the great truths of eternity is about your heart, then you know by your own experience what is meant by the christian purifying.

The Apostle points out the *source* of this purification, when he tells us it comes from "obeying the truth through the spirit,"— that is, from obedience to that truth which manifests its power by spiritual influences. It is necessary to observe this particularly, because some persons, from ignorance, mistake, or indolence, persuade themselves that this purifying of the heart is a mysterious and special operation of God, in which they themselves have little or nothing to do. But you will observe, the Apostle Peter says nothing like this. He derives this purity from obeying God's truth, as the effect in any case comes from the cause. It is not more certain that water will cleanse the body, than it is that the inward and hearty reception of religious truth will cleanse the soul. It is endowed by God with this vital power of promoting the moral health of man; and it remains with ourselves to say, whether this divine gift shall lie by us neglected or be taken up and *used for the purposes* of spiritual life and purity. It is *the instrument by* which the power of heaven operates;

but it operates only on such as are disposed to be its subjects. I rejoice to believe that God is the original source of all that moral purifying, which the heart receives from Christianity. So, too, it is God who sustains our bodies. But *how* is this done? Why, through the instrumentality of the food which his bounty provides for us. And just so, it is God who purifies the human soul. But *how?* Why, through the instrumentality of our obedience to that divine truth which He has set before us.

Further; this truth which we are to obey in order that we may be pure, is not to be sought chiefly among the peculiar doctrines of this or that sect, the distinguishing opinions of this or that party, which their respective champions are apt to think all important, and essential to the very name and character of a Christian. No; the purifying truth is to be found in those plain and manifest instructions of spiritual wisdom, the direct object of which is to make us good. This is soul-purifying and soul-saving truth; and we need look no further to ask men what we shall believe, or to what creed or standard of faith we shall conform. The great central principles of Christianity have a healing and cleansing power, which no time and no circumstances can impair. Whatever makes man wise not for this world only, but for the everlasting world, whatever pours consolation into the wounded heart, gives strength for duty, and leads right onward in the path to heaven,— whatever is of this character belongs essentially to that truth, by obeying which we are purified: everything of this sort is the same yesterday, today, and forever; everthing of this sort is imbedded in the very heart of the gospel. We are not sufficiently aware that the *only influences which* can prepare us for eternity, or

which we can carry onward in eternity, are practical influences. All good men have the same moral training for heaven, however different may be the modes in which they have held communion with the Infinite Spirit; and they will all at length confess that these everlasting parts of their religion are the substance, to which the other parts bear the same relation as the scaffolding does to the building around which it is raised.

Thus we see what the channel is, in which God conveys spiritual influences. The sacred writer expressly affirms that it is through obedience to the truth. Why, then, should we wait in supine idleness, for the Most High to show forth his power in calling us out of darkness into light? Why should we listen to the voice of fanatical excitement, which tells us that a hand must be reached forth from heaven to us individually, in order to place us on a rock of safety? Is not God's truth with us? Does it not surround us like the light and air of heaven? And is not this the instrument, by which the soul is to be purified? Take then this truth to your heart, and you shall know for yourself that it has the power of giving health to the soul. Place yourself under the tuition of the gospel of Christ. Learn from his instructions the vast meaning there is in religion, and you will hear its voice and see its tokens in what you might otherwise pass by as cheap or trivial, — in the works of nature under your eye or around your walks, in the duties of the fireside, and in all the relations and affections of home. Wherever you go, wherever you turn, a light will be struck out for you, which, if followed with a devout spirit, will surely lead to God and heaven.

2. The change produced by Christianity is described by the Apostle as a "being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible." Here we have a figure of speech, very striking, and, if understood in its true sense, very happy. The transformation which the thoughtless or the sinful man passes through in becoming a practical Christian, is represented by his receiving another birth besides his natural birth. This or a kindred mode of speaking is common in the Christian Scriptures. Nor is it confined to them. It has prevailed more or less in other religions, especially the religions of the Eastern parts of the world. A distinguished writer, in speaking of the Hindoo faith, observes that "the most remarkable point of resemblance between the Indian and the Christian doctrines lies in the absolute identity of conception, with which both describe the process of regeneration. In the Indian creed, exactly as in our own, so soon as the soul becomes touched with the love of divine things, it is supposed to drop at once its life contaminated by sin, and, as the phœnix rises from its ashes, to spring at once into the possession of a new and purified existence. So universal is the prevalence of this idea among the Indians, that the soul so purified is said by the Brahmins, (with the same words and the same meaning familiar to ourselves) to be *new-born*."* I quote this only as an illustration of the fact, that the analogy between coming into natural life and coming into moral life is so obvious, that it has suggested itself to different nations under different religions, and has given rise among them to the same figurative mode of describing the power of religious influence over man.

The meaning of this way of speaking may be express-

* Schlegel's Lectures on the History of Literature, I. 225.

ed summarily by saying, that the man who was once a stranger to vital Christianity, but has now taken it to his heart and lives under its influence, is as much a different man from what he was before, as if he had passed into a new form of existence by going through a new birth. This does not imply that the nature which God originally gave to man must be displaced as a wicked and corrupt thing, but that the tendencies and propensities which that nature had been suffered to receive are so entirely altered, that the man is no longer the same being that he was. Our nature has originally no moral character, neither good nor bad, — but only a capacity for receiving such a character. It may be described by calling it an instrument given to us to be used, and which may be used either well or ill. The same faculties, the same power of the will, the same affections, which, when fixed upon sinful objects or directed in a wrong course, carry it headlong in depravity, may, when attached to pure objects or guided in a virtuous course, raise it to a high elevation of piety and spiritual improvement. In itself it is capable of being a great and glorious thing; but man may make it — as, alas! he often does — a corrupt and polluted thing. Suppose now a case in which this nature has been lost in the mazes of hurtful error, or sunk in the depths of sin, — suppose it to have become poor, frivolous, cramped, or defiled in the service of folly and wickedness; and then suppose it, through the instrumentality of the momentous and everlasting truths of religion, to be touched with heavenly influences, to be brought out of its degradation and slavery into the light, liberty, and happiness of the children of God, — to become, in short, virtuous, pure, and spiritualized. May

not such a change be fitly described by saying, that the individual has been *born again?* His introduction into this world was his natural birth; and is not his introduction into a new moral world another and better birth? What a great change is effected, when a man is reformed even from a single vice, and brought into the opposite virtue! And if we suppose this change to become general, and the whole moral nature to be rescued from the prevalent dominion of sin, and placed under the sanctifying power of religious principle, we shall perceive that the language, which describes this renovation as *a new birth*, is not in the least degree extravagant or inappropriate. No; thus explained, there is a deep and solemn meaning in it. And however fanaticism may abuse such expressions and draw from them unwarrantable consequences or representations, as it has done and is doing now, still there is no fact more true or more solemn than the moral regeneration of the human heart by christian truth and under christian principles.

We hear or read a great deal at the present day about revivals, about conversion, and about being born again. With many these seem to be the very watchwords of religion. Perhaps no terms in our language are used in a more random and confused manner than these. Among the multitudes, by whom they are repeated from mouth to mouth as if there were a sort of magical charm in them, how few pause to consider what they really mean,—how few consider whether to be the subject of a revival, and to be a truly good man, signify one and the same thing. That a great change is produced by the gospel upon those who heartily receive it, no one, I suppose, will deny. But it is a moral change, a change by which the mind is

enlightened and the heart turned from evil to good, which manifests its existence by gradual, increasing, and lasting effects upon the character, by producing the peaceable fruits of righteousness and charity in the temper, disposition, and habits of the individual. Such a change as this you may call a revival, a regeneration, a new birth, a conversion, — or you may call it moral advancement, practical improvement in the christian life, progress in holiness. The name makes no difference, if you understand yourself and are understood by others. The substance is there, and that is enough. But all the words you can heap up, borrowed from the language of sectarian theology, will never compensate for the want of the thing itself, — that is, for the want of real christian improvement in heart and life.

This regenerating power, the Apostle tells us, comes from "the word of God which liveth and abideth forever;" from no arts, no machinery, no contrivances of man, but from that fountain of moral influence opened by God, which abideth forever. This is the prerogative of divine truth, that it is eternal and unchangeable. Man, with all his devices and his works, passes away. The material universe, with its gorgeous array of suns and worlds, grows old. The contrivances by which man seeks to act upon and stimulate the passions of his fellow-men, and to stir up a temporary swell of feeling for the sake of excitement or notoriety, — all these become stale, unprofitable, and worse than useless. But the truth of God liveth and abideth forever. Yes, there it is, shining forth, the sun of the moral world. There it ever has been. There it ever will be. And as the generations of men come and go in quick succession, blessed are they who

have felt its warmth, and have walked heavenward in its light!

As the result of this moral regeneration, the Apostle inculcates upon his brethren this charge — "see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." The natural fruit of the operation of christian truth on the heart is enlarged, generous, and sincere love; the love of all that is good, pure, and beautiful in God's universe, which comes upon the soul like the still sunshine of a calm and gentle day upon one, who reposes in silence and solitude; that compassion for those who wander from the path of life into the ways of sin, which springs from a full and affecting sense of the deadly evil of sin, and of the misery which is seen in its course. The love, which looks from man up to God, and sees the connecting line between them, which delights in the good of a fellow immortal, wherever he may be found, which rejoices to see him ascending in the path of virtue and of spiritual life, and blesses God for it, and which weeps, as angels do, to see him going to degradation and ruin at the bidding of bad passions and depraved propensities; — this is the love that results from purification through the truth of God which liveth and abideth forever.

These are some of the leading considerations, to which we are led by the Apostle Peter's description of the nature and efficacy of christian truth. We should open our minds to these topics, as it becomes those to do who feel an interest in their immortal welfare. At a period like the present, when so much is said, and sometimes so wildly and foolishly, on these subjects, it is peculiarly important for us to look at them in a serious spirit and on their practical side, that we may not be led astray by

the misguided zeal of the fanatic on the one hand, nor by the jeers and taunts of the scoffer on the other. Let us not for a moment lose sight of the great fact, that there is such a thing as a purifying and regenerating power in our religion, however much or frequently it may be misunderstood or abused. Be not carried away by the noisy and imposing excitement, that resembles the flames painted on pictures, which, while they glare and look red, give no warmth and no light. But at the same time, prize, yea, prize above all things, the renovating influences of true religion. She comes to you in all the gentleness and depth of her quiet power, and beseeches you, for the love you bear to your own souls, to take her counsels and to hold fast her instructions. She entreats you, as we would entreat one whom we love, to go with her, and choose those ways which are pleasantness, and those paths which are peace. Will you say nay to her invitations? Will you tell her that you will have none of her counsels, and that you choose not her ways? You can do so, if you will. But pause first, and think of the consequences; think of the account you must render for resolving whom you will serve. Life and death, happiness and misery, are before us; and we have an election to make between them. Shall it not be our most fervent prayer, the object of our most earnest striving, that we may know by our own experience the purifying and renovating power of christian truth, that we may be born of that incorruptible seed, the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever?

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# UNITARIANS

ENTITLED TO

# THE NAME OF CHRISTIANS.

BY JOSEPH HUTTON, LL. D.

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The following tract is a discourse, delivered by its author in England, in October, 1831. It was occasioned by an Address, referred to on page 7, and is "designed to prove that all who learn of Christ are fellow Christians, and that his universal church is bounded by no sectarian limits."

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# UNITARIANS ENTITLED TO

# THE NAME OF CHRISTIANS.

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WHAT is it to be a Christian? The answer to this question seems to me to be distinctly implied, if not directly conveyed, in the words from which we learn the origin, and the primitive meaning, of the term. "The *disciples* were called Christians first in Antioch." To be a Christian is to be a disciple of Christ, or in other words to receive him as a divinely commissioned instructor, as one authorised by God to teach, and of whom, consequently, it is the duty of man to learn. This is a clear, simple, and comprehensive definition, for which I am convinced that no better can be substituted. All are Christians, be their peculiar opinions of Christ's doctrine what they may, who take him for their Lord and Master, and confess themselves under a divinely imposed obligation to yield a faithful obedience to his commands.

In the very first age of the Christian church, no less than in the present, we know from the best authority that the words and will of our common Lord were on some topics variously interpreted by his followers, who accordingly began, even before the death of the Apostles, to separate into sects and parties, and mutually to stigmatize

each other's views and opinions as erroneous and heretical. I am of Paul, said one, and I of Cephas, said another, and I of Apollos, said a third. All, however, professed to be of Christ; nor do we read of any who had the presumption to deny to their fellow Christians, on the ground of a mere difference of opinion, the Christian name. What right indeed could they have to do so? If, as the text above quoted implies, Christian, in its primary use, was a general appellation to which every disciple of Christ, as such, was entitled, it is obvious that it could not be withheld from any one who acknowledged the great Teacher's authority, and sincerely professed to learn of him.

A disciple of Christ is one who places himself under him as a Master and Instructor, who sits at his feet and listens to his precepts, with an unfeigned desire and resolution, so far as he can understand, to obey them. He may be slow to comprehend, — or prone to mistake, — the meaning of his Master's instructions; he may be a dull, unapprehensive, blundering pupil; but so long as he frequents the Master's school, sincerely professes respect for his authority, and endeavors, however imperfectly and unsuccessfully, to understand and profit by his lessons, according to the degree of ability that God has given to him, the rights and privileges of discipleship are fairly his; the benevolent Instructor will not withhold, nor will the noble-minded and generous associate in study dispute them. Jesus Christ assuredly is not the master who, on the sole ground of incapacity or mistake, will banish any pupil from his presence, or disown his connexion with him. "How long shall I bear with you?" he may say; but with every sincere and honest-minded disciple he *will* bear long. No errors of the head will he permit to con-

quer his patience or his love, and even many errors of the heart he will put to the account of human frailty, and allow the perverse and wayward pupil time to atone for them by the after-workings of deep and heart-felt penitence.

Surely he who pardoned all those that were offended because of him, on that awful night on which he fell a victim to the treachery of Judas, — and who so soon restored to his confidence and love the disciple that had denied him thrice, — surely he is not the master who will banish any one of his followers from his presence, or forbid him to assume his honored name, for no reason more cogent than this, that, with every wish to understand, he has, from prejudice, or precipitancy, or deficiency of judgment, misunderstood his doctrine. To the impenitent workers of iniquity we are told indeed that Jesus will say, "Depart from me — I never knew you;" but where do we learn, or what ground have we to suppose, that he will pronounce so harsh a sentence on the unfortunate victims of involuntary error? On the contrary, is it not his own declaration that the morally "blind have no sin," and that he who, from ignorance, "committeth things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few stripes?"

What then must we think of those professed followers of our Lord, who, not contented with asserting and advocating (as it is doubtless their right and duty to do, provided they do it in the spirit of meekness,) their own views of his doctrine, presume to deny, not merely the sound judgment, but the good faith and sincerity of those who happen to think differently from themselves; and would absolutely banish them from the Master's school, and forbid them to assume his very name, because they cannot

acquiesce in *their* private interpretation of his words! "You are not disciples of Christ," say they, "because you do not think of him and his instructions as we do. You call yourselves his followers indeed, and pretend to sit at his feet and learn of him, but your pretensions are insincere. You can have no real reverence for his authority, you must be altogether destitute of that docility which is essential to discipleship. Wherefore? "Because the lessons which proceed from the Master's lips do not excite in your minds the same ideas that they excite in ours." Is this the language of modest, humble-minded learners? Would such be found arrogating to themselves, and to those who think with them, not merely all the sound sense and acute discernment, but likewise all the deference, docility, and good-feeling of the school?

Methinks it is for the Master, rather than for the scholar, to pronounce on the comparative merit of his pupils, to say who has listened with the most attentive and docile mind, who has best understood his meaning, and who has most faithfully applied to practice the lessons he has taught. If *he* shall declare any of his professed disciples to be unworthy of his name, and shall pronounce upon them the awful sentence of expulsion, his decision will doubtless be final, and will rest on grounds of reason and of justice which the unhappy culprits will have no power to dispute; but that decision, I have little hesitation in affirming, no fellow-disciple, who properly feels his position, and understands his duty, as a learner, — as one who is himself liable to errors both in theory and practice, — will either dare or desire to anticipate. "*I* perfectly understand the lessons which *you* ignorantly or intentionally pervert. *I* listen with an intelligence and a

docility of which *you* are destitute. We should not sit upon the same form together. The same school should not contain us. I alone am worthy of the name of a disciple." This is the language not of a well-grounded, modest, self-confidence, but of arrogance and presumption, and it may well be doubted whether they who utter it are indeed the well-instructed pupils that they profess to be, or whether they have not yet to learn what it imports them most to know, — namely, "what manner of spirit they are of."

All the disciples of Christ, all, that is, who profess sincerely to believe in Christ's divine mission and authority, — to form their faith upon his doctrines, and to guide their practice by his precepts, are entitled to the name of Christians, if the term be used in that sense, in which we are informed that it was first employed at Antioch. In two other passages of Scripture only do we find it, and in neither of these is its signification restricted to the professors of any peculiar views of christian doctrine.

"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," said King Agrippa to Paul, (Acts xxvi. 28,) after that illustrious Apostle had related to him the history of his own miraculous conversion to Christianity, and had briefly set forth those general truths, in the cordial belief of which all the followers of Christ of every denomination are agreed. Not a single word had he said of what a modern writer represents* as the essential doctrines of "*Catholic*," or universal, "*Christianity*," — namely, — to quote this writer's words, — "the three subsistences in the Invisible Godhead, — the assumption of human nature by the se-

* See Rev. R. W. Hamilton's Address to the Constituents of Airedale College. p. 32.

cond person, his death in this nature to make an atonement, the reality of that mortal death receiving all the efficacy of that divine conserviency; — the influence of the Holy Spirit in separating the objects of divine favor, and succeeding the means of moral appointment; — the *condition* of man as a liability to endless punishment, and his *disposition* as an estrangement from all taste for good and all power of self-recovery, &c." Not one of these peculiar doctrines did the Apostle set forth in that speech, by which he endeavored, with impressive earnestness, to persuade Agrippa "to be a Christian." He stated the circumstances of his own conversion, he asserted the Messiahship and the resurrection of Christ, and, having done so, he solemnly called upon Agrippa to confess the impression that the facts which he had stated, and the arguments which he had urged, had made upon his mind. His appeal was replied to by the response, "almost thou persuadest me to be a *Christian.*" Agrippa at least could not have been aware, from anything that Paul had said, that, in order to be a Christian, he must, in addition to the adoption of several other new and mysterious opinions, learn to combine with the ancient Jewish belief in the strict unity of the Godhead, the reception of a doctrine, apparently, if not really, inconsistent with it, namely, that of the tri-personality of the Divine being. Had he been aware of this, it may well be questioned whether his mind would have made even the progress that it did towards conviction. No moderate length of time, and no common cogency of argument would have sufficed, in my opinion, to reconcile the understanding of an intelligent and conscientious Jew to the doctrine of the Three Subsistences in the one Godhead. It is certain that the

Apostle on this occasion said nothing of it; and it is more than probable therefore that Agrippa might have become, not only almost, but altogether, a Christian without believing it.

In one other passage of the New Testament the term "Christian" occurs, not however in such a connexion as to lead us to affix to it any more orthodox and exclusive sense than that of a sincere disciple of Christ. "Let none of you," says the Apostle Peter, in his first Epistle (iv. 15, 16,) "suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busy-body, in other men's matters. Yet, if any man suffer as a *Christian* let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf." On the whole then, I think, we may safely affirm that the scriptural sense of the term Christian, to which it might be wise for Christians to adhere, is neither more nor less than that of a disciple of Christ, — of one who, from a sincere belief in Christ's divine commission and Messiahship, chooses him for his instructor and his Lord.

This view of the subject is strongly confirmed by the fact, that a profession of belief in a creed consisting of one article, viz. that "Jesus Christ was the Son of God," was deemed sufficient in the apostolic age to entitle him who made it to christian baptism. "See here is water," said the Eunuch to Philip, who had been preaching unto him Jesus, "what doth hinder me to be baptised? And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the *Son of God.* And he commanded the chariot to stand still, and they went down, both, into the water, Philip and the Eunuch; and he baptised him." Here certainly we have no proof that to be a baptised Christian it was

necessary to be a believer in the Three Subsistences, the incarnation of the second person, and the other mysterious opinions which uninspired men, not satisfied with believing them themselves, would obtrude as absolutely certain and essential upon the minds of others.

Again read the address of Peter to Cornelius, (Acts x.) containing all the truths, if we may confide in the statement of St. Luke, to which the assent of the devout Centurion was required, previously to his baptism. Not a word will you find in this address to which Christians of all sects, Unitarian as well as Trinitarian, heterodox as well as orthodox, do not yield a ready and full assent. That God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the holy spirit and with power, — that he went about doing good, and working miracles of love and mercy — that he was crucified by the Jews, — that God raised him up the third day, and showed him openly to chosen witnesses, — that he is ordained of God to be the judge of the quick and the dead, — that he is Lord of all, of course under that God who " made him both Lord and Christ,"—and that through his name whosoever truly believeth in him shall receive remission of sins : — This is the sum total of St Peter's preaching to Cornelius : these, (unless the statement in the book of Acts is a garbled and deficient one,) are the only articles of faith to which the attention of Cornelius was invited, previously to his baptism. Whatever the good Centurion might subsequently learn, we are certainly led by the narrative of St Luke to the conclusion, that he was baptised and consequently made a member of the Christian Church, without having been initiated into any of the peculiar doctrines of modern orthodoxy.

Once more, peruse that celebrated discourse (Acts ii.)

which the Apostle Peter addressed on the day of Pentecost, immediately after the pouring out of the holy spirit, to the men of Judea, and all them that dwelt at Jerusalem, the fruit of which was the conversion to the christian faith — publicly attested by the baptism — of about three thousand souls. In this discourse likewise we find no doctrine set forth to which professing Christians of every sect cannot heartily subscribe; *set forth*, I say, for as to mere *inferences*, though every individual is, without doubt, at liberty to draw them for himself, as his private judgment dictates, no one is at liberty to draw them for another. The discourse referred to describes Jesus of Nazareth, in express terms, as a man approved of God amongst the Jews by miracles and wonders, and signs which God did by him in the midst of them; it speaks of him as the subject of prophecy: it asserts his resurrection from the dead, his exaltation to the right hand of God, and his communication of the gift of the holy spirit, which he had received from God for them, to his disciples; it represents him as the Lord of David, though descended from him; and concludes with these impressive words, which we may regard as the Apostle's own summary of the substance of his discourse — "Therefore let all the House of Israel know assuredly that *God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*" Such is the discourse of Peter. That there are one or two expressions in it which Unitarians and Trinitarians will interpret differently, I admit; that it is strikingly and decidedly favorable to the views of the former I firmly believe; but of this I am certain, that no one, possessed of any moderate portion of common sense and candor, will pretend to say that the peculiar and distinctive doc-

trines of modern orthodoxy are taught in it. Catholic Christians of the school of the author above quoted, Peter's three thousand converts could not possibly be at the period of their baptism, unless the sacred historian has grievously misrepresented the Apostle, by suppressing the largest, and, on the orthodox supposition, by far the most important part of his discourse. St Peter at Jerusalem, like St Paul at Athens, (Acts xvii.) gives witness with great power of the divine commission, resurrection, and exaltation of the Lord Jesus, but like him also says not a word of the Three Subsistences, or the Incarnation of the Second Person, or the *popular** doctrine of the Atonement.

These, perhaps, it will be urged, constituted the strong meat for men, which it would have been unwise to administer to babes in Christ, but which would be imparted to them afterwards, as they gained strength to bear it. Holding a very different opinion, believing on the contrary that the doctrines in question are anything but good food either for men or babes, I do not now propose to enter upon any discussion of this point. My sole object at present is to show, that to be a Christian in the Apostolic age, and to be formally recognised as such by baptism, it was not necessary even to have heard of these doctrines,

* The doctrine of the Atonement, in what they maintain to be its true *Scriptural* sense, the doctrine, that is, of the reconciliation of man to God — not of God to man, a form of expression which does not occur once in the New Testament — effected by the death of Christ, and the consequences to which it led, Unitarians do believe; and this doctrine both of the Apostles distinctly recognise in their speeches, when they speak of the universality of the call and the promise, as the fruit of the completed obedience, death, and *resurrection* of Christ.

much less to have believed them, and that the epithet *Christian*, therefore, in its scriptural sense, is certainly not inclusive of those ideas which would restrict its application to the professors of what is called modern orthodoxy.

"If thou confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus," says the Apostle Paul, (Rom. x. 10,) "and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved, — for with the heart man believeth to justification, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." — That is, as I understand the Apostle's words, "If you honestly and truly profess to receive Jesus Christ, as your divinely commissioned Lord and Instructer, and if you sincerely believe, with a faith that operates upon the conduct because it has its seat in the heart, that he was raised to life, after his crucifixion, by the power of God, you may henceforth regard yourself as a genuine member of the Christian Church, delivered not only from the yoke of the Jewish law, or the still more oppressive bondage of Heathen superstition, but also from that slavery, which is of all others the most to be deprecated, the slavery of sin." "In this passage," says Mr Belsham, in his valuable Commentary on the Epistles, "the Apostle states in the clearest language the fundamental article of the Christian faith; all that is necessary to entitle a man to be admitted into the community of believers, and to be acknowledged as a Christian brother — 'If thou confess with thy mouth that Jesus is Lord or Master, and believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.'" "How widely different," he adds, "is this truly Apostolic symbol from the long catalogue of mysterious and self-contradictory articles

cond person, his death in this nature to make an atonement, the reality of that mortal death receiving all the efficacy of that divine conserviency; — the influence of the Holy Spirit in separating the objects of divine favor, and succeeding the means of moral appointment; — the *condition* of man as a liability to endless punishment, and his *disposition* as an estrangement from all taste for good and all power of self-recovery, &c." Not one of these peculiar doctrines did the Apostle set forth in that speech, by which he endeavored, with impressive earnestness, to persuade Agrippa "to be a Christian." He stated the circumstances of his own conversion, he asserted the Messiahship and the resurrection of Christ, and, having done so, he solemnly called upon Agrippa to confess the impression that the facts which he had stated, and the arguments which he had urged, had made upon his mind. His appeal was replied to by the response, "almost thou persuadest me to be a *Christian*." Agrippa at least could not have been aware, from anything that Paul had said, that, in order to be a Christian, he must, in addition to the adoption of several other new and mysterious opinions, learn to combine with the ancient Jewish belief in the strict unity of the Godhead, the reception of a doctrine, apparently, if not really, inconsistent with it, namely, that of the tri-personality of the Divine being. Had he been aware of this, it may well be questioned whether his mind would have made even the progress that it did towards conviction. No moderate length of time, and no common cogency of argument would have sufficed, in my opinion, to reconcile the understanding of an intelligent and conscientious Jew to the doctrine of the Three Subsistences in the one Godhead. It is certain that the

understand, and apply to the regulation of his faith and practice, according to the ability which God has given to him. Neither do I dispute that Christ and his Apostles have left on record many sayings, which it is highly important for us to comprehend in their real import, though the comprehension of them be not essential to give us a just title to the Christian name. All that I contend for now is, that sincere discipleship alone is enough to constitute us Christians, and to entitle us to the outward privileges of membership in the universal Church. "The *disciples* were called Christians first at Antioch," and if we too are Christ's disciples, no one has a right to deny that we are Christians. Those who differ from us on points of doctrine may fairly say, if they really think so, that we are not, *in their opinion*, well instructed in the theory, or exemplary and faithful in the practice, of Christianity; but when they deny that we are Christians, they most certainly employ language for which they cannot produce any sufficient warrant, either of reason or of Scripture.

They think us tares, it may be, growing among the wheat, of which they presume themselves to be genuine ears. Suppose them right: are they at liberty therefore to exclude us from the field before our time? Are they quite certain that it is for *them* to make the due discrimination between our nature and their own? Would they not act more modestly, and more wisely, and more scripturally too, if they allowed us to grow quietly and without offence by their side, till that harvest of which the reapers shall be the angels? It is not surely for the wheat to gather *itself* into the garner, or to consign the unhappy tares to the consuming flame! and may it not

necessary to be a believer in the Three Subsistences, the incarnation of the second person, and the other mysterious opinions which uninspired men, not satisfied with believing them themselves, would obtrude as absolutely certain and essential upon the minds of others.

Again read the address of Peter to Cornelius, (Acts x.) containing all the truths, if we may confide in the statement of St. Luke, to which the assent of the devout Centurion was required, previously to his baptism. Not a word will you find in this address to which Christians of all sects, Unitarian as well as Trinitarian, heterodox as well as orthodox, do not yield a ready and full assent. That God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the holy spirit and with power, — that he went about doing good, and working miracles of love and mercy — that he was crucified by the Jews, — that God raised him up the third day, and showed him openly to chosen witnesses, — that he is ordained of God to be the judge of the quick and the dead, — that he is Lord of all, of course under that God who "made him both Lord and Christ,"—and that through his name whosoever truly believeth in him shall receive remission of sins: — This is the sum total of St Peter's preaching to Cornelius: these, (unless the statement in the book of Acts is a garbled and deficient one,) are the only articles of faith to which the attention of Cornelius was invited, previously to his baptism. Whatever the good Centurion might subsequently learn, we are certainly led by the narrative of St Luke to the conclusion, that he was baptised and consequently made a member of the Christian Church, without having been initiated into any of the peculiar doctrines of modern orthodoxy.

Once more, peruse that celebrated discourse (Acts ii.)

ich the Apostle Peter addressed on the day of Pente-
it, immediately after the pouring out of the holy spirit,
he men of Judea, and all them that dwelt at Jerusalem,
fruit of which was the conversion to the christian
h — publicly attested by the baptism — of about three
usand souls. In this discourse likewise we find no
trine set forth to which professing Christians of every
t cannot heartily subscribe; *set forth*, I say, for as to
re *inferences*, though every individual is, without doubt,
iberty to draw them for himself, as his private judg-
nt dictates, no one is at liberty to draw them for an-
er. The discourse referred to describes Jesus of Naz-
th, in express terms, as a man approved of God amongst
Jews by miracles and wonders, and signs which God
by him in the midst of them; it speaks of him as the
ject of prophecy: it asserts his resurrection from the
d, his exaltation to the right hand of God, and his
mmunication of the gift of the holy spirit, which he
l received from God for them, to his disciples; it repre-
ts him as the Lord of David, though descended from
; and concludes with these impressive words, which
may regard as the Apostle's own summary of the sub-
ce of his discourse — "Therefore let all the House
Israel know assuredly that *God hath made that same
us whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*"
h is the discourse of Peter. That there are one or
expressions in it which Unitarians and Trinitarians
interpret differently, I admit; that it is strikingly and
idedly favorable to the views of the former I firmly
eve; but of this I am certain, that no one, possessed
ny moderate portion of common sense and candor,
pretend to say that the peculiar and distinctive doc-

trines of modern orthodoxy are taught in it. Catholic Christians of the school of the author above quoted, Peter's three thousand converts could not possibly be at the period of their baptism, unless the sacred historian has grievously misrepresented the Apostle, by suppressing the largest, and, on the orthodox supposition, by far the most important part of his discourse. St Peter at Jerusalem, like St Paul at Athens, (Acts xvii.) gives witness with great power of the divine commission, resurrection, and exaltation of the Lord Jesus, but like him also says not a word of the Three Subsistences, or the Incarnation of the Second Person, or the *popular** doctrine of the Atonement.

These, perhaps, it will be urged, constituted the strong meat for men, which it would have been unwise to administer to babes in Christ, but which would be imparted to them afterwards, as they gained strength to bear it. Holding a very different opinion, believing on the contrary that the doctrines in question are anything but good food either for men or babes, I do not now propose to enter upon any discussion of this point. My sole object at present is to show, that to be a Christian in the Apostolic age, and to be formally recognised as such by baptism, it was not necessary even to have heard of these doctrines,

* The doctrine of the Atonement, in what they maintain to be its true *Scriptural* sense, the doctrine, that is, of the reconciliation of man to God — not of God to man, a form of expression which does not occur once in the New Testament — effected by the death of Christ, and the consequences to which it led, Unitarians do believe; and this doctrine both of the Apostles distinctly recognise in their speeches, when they speak of the universality of the call and the promise, as the fruit of the completed obedience, death, and resurrection of Christ.

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which are the boast of many Churches calling themselves Christian."

As strikingly confirmatory of the position that the Messiahship of Jesus is the fundamental doctrine of the Gospel, I must not leave unnoticed the emphatic eulogium which our Lord himself pronounced upon Peter, when he first declared his belief in that doctrine. (Matt. xvi. 16.) "He saith unto them, but who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art *the Christ, the son of the living God.* And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven, and I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church." Upon the orthodox view of the subject this was a meagre confession of Peter's, after all. Upon our view, it was everything that could be desired, for it was all that was necessary to constitute him who made it a Christian, and to qualify him therefore for being a founder of the Christian Church. The importance which our Lord attaches to Peter's confession harmonizes well with the fact, that it was the only one afterwards required to constitute a disciple.

But does it follow, it will be said, that,—because a belief in the Messiahship and Resurrection of Christ is sufficient to admit to membership in his Church, and to give a title to the Christian name,—this therefore is all that a well-instructed Christian may be expected to believe? I am far from asserting that this is the case. The Scriptures of the New Covenant contain a rich treasure of moral and religious truth, an immense number of important facts, doctrines, and precepts, which it is the duty of every sincere Christian to study diligently, and to

understand, and apply to the regulation of his faith and practice, according to the ability which God has given to him. Neither do I dispute that Christ and his Apostles have left on record many sayings, which it is highly important for us to comprehend in their real import, though the comprehension of them be not essential to give us a just title to the Christian name. All that I contend for now is, that sincere discipleship alone is enough to constitute us Christians, and to entitle us to the outward privileges of membership in the universal Church. "The *disciples* were called Christians first at Antioch," and if we too are Christ's disciples, no one has a right to deny that we are Christians. Those who differ from us on points of doctrine may fairly say, if they really think so, that we are not, *in their opinion*, well instructed in the theory, or exemplary and faithful in the practice, of Christianity; but when they deny that we are Christians, they most certainly employ language for which they cannot produce any sufficient warrant, either of reason or of Scripture.

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well be questioned whether those ears, allowing them the name, are indeed so full and healthy as they should be, which stand so high above their fellows of the field, instead of bowing themselves, as full ears are wont to do, upon the stalk?

In the gospel net, we are told, fishes are caught of every various kind. When it is full it shall be drawn to shore, and the good shall be gathered into vessels, and the bad shall be cast away. But who shall make the selection? The fishes themselves? No — but He to whom the net belongs, and by whom it was cast into the sea.

In the bridal feast amongst the guests, "both bad and good," whom the servants shall have gathered together from the highways, at the bidding of their King, some will doubtless appear unprovided with the wedding garment. Who then shall turn them out? Their fellow-guests? No — it will be for the King, and for him only, to say to his servants, "Bind them hand and foot, and take them away, and cast them into the outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." But may not the companions of these unfortunates lawfully anticipate this result? May they not charitably warn them to go out in due time, and provide a garment like their own, ere the King arrive? By all means, if they are quite sure that their own is the right one, of which, by the way, their thinking so may not be an absolutely certain proof. Even in this case, however, it will be their duty, whatever advice they may think it right to offer in a friendly spirit, to treat those who sit by them with courtesy and kindness, till the King appears, and to remember that, whether worthy or unworthy, they appear at the feast as his bidden guests. They have been

called, and they have come, and it is for him only to decide whether they have or have not made proper provision for their coming. For my own part, I must be allowed to doubt whether any guest who has the real wedding garment on, will either feel disposed, or think himself competent, to pass peremptory sentence on the garb of another. "You call yourself a Christian, but you are not one of my kind, and therefore not a true one," is language which we should hardly expect to hear from the lips of a disciple, who had learned of a meek and lowly Master, and who, like him, was "clothed with humility:" that modest, sober-colored vestment is usually found to hide, even from the wearer's own eyes, the brighter hues and finer qualities of the garments that lie beneath it.

In the formation of his own creed, and the regulation of his own practice, the sincerely devout and humble-minded Christian will find difficulties, and discouragements, abundantly sufficient to prevent him from dogmatizing uncharitably, about either the faith or the practice of other men. What he understands his Divine Master to teach he will reverently learn, and honestly profess, and faithfully improve and apply, but he will not hastily judge his fellow-disciples, or say of any, who have voluntarily assumed his Master's name, that they are unworthy to bear it. In his character of learner he may feel constrained to believe that he understands his Instructer's words better than those who give a different interpretation to them, but he will recollect that, after all, there is at least a possibility of their being right, and that, even if they do err, the errors of their understanding may not have their source in the depravity of their hearts, but may

arise from other causes, not inconsistent with their diligence, docility, and conscientiousness as learners. Fellow-disciples they may deserve to be called in despite of their errors, and if fellow-disciples, then fellow-Christians.

My Unitarian Brethren, I have asserted your right, in common with my own, to the Christian name, in the humble confidence that you are willing and anxious to be numbered amongst those who *learn of Christ*. This character, I am sure, you will not disclaim; of this character labor and pray that you may prove yourselves worthy. Let me conclude by reminding you of a few of the duties which it involves.

And, in the first place, if you are disciples of Christ, worthy of the name, you will learn of *him only*. His school is not one in which the pupils are commissioned and empowered to perform the Master's duty. "Learn of *me*" is his injunction, not "learn of *mine*." You will find, indeed, many of your uninspired fellow-disciples very willing, and, in their own opinions, quite competent, to teach you; they will kindly offer to save you the trouble of personal inquiry; they will give you lists properly numbered, and arranged, and drawn up in terms even more clear and explicit than those of Scripture, of the articles, both essential, and non-essential, of the Christian faith; they will tell you exactly what you *must*, and what you *may*, and what you *may not* believe in order to salvation. My friends, by whatsoever name they may call themselves, — in whatsoever place they may address you; whether they occupy the chair of the professor or the pulpit of the divine; whether they speak to you from this pulpit or from any other; be their reputation for talent, in-

tegrity, and soundness in the faith, high or low; — trust them not. Receive not, on their bare assertion, anything that they may say of Christ or of his law; but go at once to the fountain-head; and inquire of Christ himself. Search the Scriptures, and ascertain, to the best of your ability, from them, what are the articles — not of the Catholic Christianity of the present day, which it is of small importance for you to know — but of that Christianity which Jesus himself taught, — which deserves therefore to be, — and in the final result of all things certainly will be, — Catholic. The fictions of opinion, says a wise heathen, time blots out; the just but slowly-matured decisions of truth and reason it confirms. Be it your sole aim to understand aright the lessons of the Master, as they proceed from his own lips and those of his *inspired* followers. Trouble not yourselves to determine whether your interpretation of his words be, or be not, that which is commonly adopted. If it be the true one, you may rest assured that it will become popular in due time; and if it be not true, no popularity can sanction it, or prevent its ultimate rejection.

Secondly, if you be true disciples of Christ, you will learn of him *fearlessly*, as well as exclusively. You will not go about timidly inquiring of your fellow-christians what they think of Christ, and fashioning your thoughts by theirs, but you will seriously and deliberately form, and then honestly profess, your own opinion. Only be diligent, humble-minded, devout searchers after truth, and you may rest assured that no speculative errors into which you may fall, in the conscientious exercise of the powers which God has given you, can endanger your final welfare. Reverently listen to the great Instructer;

put forth all your mental energies to comprehend, digest and apply his lessons; and fear not that he will visit you with his displeasure for any involuntary inaccuracy of judgment, or defect of comprehension. Your disagreement from your fellow-disciples in opinion need give you no concern, if you are satisfied that you have exerted your own best judgment; and unless you have done so, their agreement with you ought to give you no satisfaction. Be Christians, according to your knowledge and ability, both in theory and practice, and you may then deem it a matter of comparative, if not absolute, indifference whether you are called or thought so. Obloquy from some quarter or other is sure to follow a fearless pursuit and maintenance of truth; but the true disciple of Christ will not bate a jot of his righteous ardor, in the cause of what he deems pure religion, on this account. He will act resolutely upon his own view of Christ's instructions, even though the consequence should be his being denounced, by those who differ from him, as no Christian. The man who is ashamed of that form of doctrine which he regards as genuine Christianity is in fact ashamed of Christ, and of him, therefore, there is the greatest reason to fear that Christ will be ashamed in the last day. Our opinions, brethren, may be peculiar, they may be unpopular, but if we believe them, — after due examination conducted in the proper spirit, — to be scriptural and true, we shall prove ourselves cowards and traitors to our Master's cause, if we do not openly profess, and zealously, yet meekly, promulgate them. It is hard, certainly, that our fellow-disciples should "separate us from their company, and reproach us, and cast out our name as evil — for the Son of Man's sake," — or, what amounts

to the same thing, for our profession of that doctrine, which we conscientiously believe him to have taught. Nevertheless we must be ready to bear this, and, if need be, a great deal more than this, in what we think his cause. We must not sacrifice his good opinion for that of his frail fallible followers. He that loveth father or mother, son or daughter, sect or system, the world's approval or the world's friendship, more than Christ, is not worthy of him. In the words of the Apostle, then, "Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil doer, or as a busy body in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a *Christian*, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf."

Thirdly, as disciples of Christ it is your duty to learn of him, with *attentive* and *unprejudiced* minds. Nothing can more strikingly evince the necessity of diligence and impartiality in the study of the gospel records than the vast variety of clashing and contradictory opinions which the followers of Jesus hold respecting the doctrines that he taught. Numberless are the sects into which the Christian world is divided. Sincere and good men, genuine disciples of their common Master, may be found, there cannot be a doubt, in all of them. How then is it that they have differed, and continue to differ, so widely? This is not, surely, to be ascribed altogether to the difficulty of the subject, or the ambiguity of the terms in which the doctrines of Christ have been conveyed; but, in part at least, to the strong prejudices, of various kinds, with which the study of the gospel has been, for the most part, commenced; and the precipitancy, inaccuracy, and eager desire to arrive at conclusions before premises have been well considered, with which it has been

carried on. On a subject respecting which opinions so various are held, it is clear that no one can be well-instructed, or come to just conclusions, who does not sedulously endeavor to free his mind from every improper bias, and to fix it closely and steadily on the best and purest sources of information. Let the disciple of Christ, placing no reliance on what uninspired men have taught, sit daily at his Master's feet, meditate upon his words, and carefully compare together the instructions which he has given them at various times; thus only will he arrive at any real and comprehensive knowledge of his will. Do not, my friends, accustom yourselves too much to consult your fellow-disciples; for, if you do, they will soon perplex you by the variety and discordance of their opinions; but never cease, not even for a single day, to study the lessons of the Master. Commentators and controversialists are the great multipliers of sects. The repeated perusal of the Scriptures themselves, with no other aids than those which may be strictly called illustrative, such as history, geography, Jewish antiquities, &c, is perhaps the very best remedy that can be prescribed for the boundless confusion and discord that the writings of theological system-makers have produced.

Once more, and finally, as disciples of Christ, *cherish a becoming spirit, and act in a proper manner, towards your fellow-disciples.* Learners we are all of us; let none of us, then, usurp the teacher's office. To be helpers of each other's faith, to assist each other, according to our ability, in understanding and applying the lessons of the Instructer, whose authority we all revere,—this we should regard both as a duty and a privilege: but to dictate the conclusion at which our fellow-disci-

ples must arrive, — to lay down the law for them in their Master's name, — and to pronounce them foolish or perverse, deficient in understanding or in moral rectitude, should they refuse to acquiesce in our decisions — this will be to forget our characters as learners, to desert the disciple's — and invade the Master's — province. We may think our associates in study mistaken in their views; so far indeed as these differ from our own, we must do so. Should evidence to that effect present itself, we may even be unable to avoid the conclusion, to which, however, we should always come with the utmost reluctance, that they are rebellious and perverse: but to decide dogmatically, upon either their opinions or actions, to speak with the confidence of heart-searching judges on the subject, and to anathemize, or cut them off as diseased members from the body of the Universal Church, before the unerring sentence of the common Lord has been pronounced, — such conduct is anything but becoming in those who are themselves in a state of pupilage. "One is our Master, even Christ, and all we are brethren." Even an inspired Apostle disclaimed the right to "exercise dominion over the faith" of his own converts, and desired them to regard him in no other character than as "the helper of their joy."

To learn ourselves with attention and docility, and while we do so to lend all the aid that we can to our associates, — to animate the good with cheering words of approbation, — to encourage the diffident, — to help on the slow, — to correct with modesty those whom we think in error, — to exhort with meekness, and, should we be unable to convince, to pity and pray for the perverse, — to set the best example that we can ourselves, — and to

hail with unfeigned self-abasement, and with cordial love and admiration, the superior excellence of others, — this will be to perform, in the best manner, the part of Christian learners, whose duty it is to combine the kindest affections towards their fellow-disciples, with the deepest reverence for their common Lord. Thus let us act, beloved brethren, that, whether our claim be recognised on earth or not, we may at least prove ourselves *worthy* to be called Christians here, and may at length be owned as such in heaven.

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MY

# RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE,

AT

# MY NATIVE HOME.

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BY WARREN BURTON.

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# MY RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.

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My first impressions respecting the Divine Being were very indefinite. From my earliest remembrance I had heard his name pronounced by my grandfather in the solemnity of prayer on the Sabbath, the only day of the seven in which he offered worship with his family. Then I frequently heard the same name uttered by some one reading aloud from the Bible, or some other religious book, on the sacred day. Thus the idea of God became most intimately associated in my mind with the Sabbath; and this seemed to me a long, very long and cheerless period. I must not only stay in the house, but much of the time sit still and silent in my little chair; restraints, with the promptings of nature within, and the invitations of nature without, render most irksome to active, prattling childhood. The stillness of the house lay like a vast burthen on my spirit. And when this stillness was broken, it was not often for my relief; for I heard but the dismal monotony of some solitary reader, which fastened the oppression still more painfully on my heart. I probably suffered more in this way than most children; for having no fit conveyance to the distant meeting-house, I could not accompany the family to public worship, for the first four years of my life. I was obliged to remain at home,

generally in company with one individual, whose turn it was to keep the house from harm and myself from mischief and danger. Alas! I had no little brother or sister to share and sympathize in the durance. Even an answering look and fellow feeling in another, would have been a welcome alleviation. It was a task to exist through the day. I hardly knew why I was kept within doors and so still. I was told that I must not play, because it was wicked. What this word meant, I was not informed. I do not recollect to have received hitherto any particular instructions concerning God, excepting perhaps, that he made me, and every body and all things. I had moreover the impression that the Sabbath had some peculiar connexion with this Being, and that he was the occasion of this pause in the ordinary pursuits of people, and of my wearisome restraint. Of course, my ideas of God, though very vague, were as unpleasant as my cheerless Sabbath associations could make them.

At length these indefinite notions were changed to a terrific distinctness, to conceptions which filled my mind with unmingled dread. I think that I was between four and five years of age, when a youth of eighteen, living with my father, undertook to give me a few hints for my religious edification. He was staying at home with me on the Sabbath, but was hardly so strict a keeper as my affectionate relatives. I wandered about the house to escape from time and solitude; but the echoes of my pattering footsteps and the creaking of doors, gave me an awful sense of lonesomeness, and I fled to an unfinished upper chamber, and crept upon a bed, where lay the aforementioned youth, enjoying that lazy luxury vouchsafed to the laborious on the day of rest. What prompt-

ed him I know not, for his character was rather the opposite of pious — perhaps as a penance, he might have been reading the Scriptures, or something else which made him feel particularly serious — however it might be, he then gave me a lesson which haunted my soul with horror for years; and it will be an everlasting remembrance to my mind. I recollect nothing of his communications, but the following appalling intelligence. He told me that if I did wrong, if I was wicked, God would put me after death into a place burning with fire and brimstone, called hell, where I should suffer the pain of the flames for ever and ever. I shuddered with emotions I never knew before. I supposed that it was wicked to laugh and play on the Sabbath, and to disobey my parents; and I knew that in these particulars I was very much inclined to wickedness, if not absolutely very guilty; and I was struck with consternation at the thought that I was liable to die at any time, and be plunged into the hell which had been described. The effect was probably greater, on account of my predisposition to gloom. The solitude of the house now seemed pervaded by an all-seeing, but invisible eye, watching my minutest actions. Thenceforth, the Sabbath, and everything of a religious nature seemed doubly dismal. When the idea of God recurred to my mind, he was ever imaged in the character of vengeance.

Not long after I had imbibed the preceding notions, my father presented me, one Sabbath morning, with a copy of the New Testament, enjoining on me to read it every Sabbath. I did as was desired, glad to find something to do, if not positively to enjoy, on the wearisome day. I had read in the Scriptures before, but had not

thought much more of their meaning, than if they had been the untranslated Greek. I had recited the Assembly's Catechism, but a child of course could not understand what is hardly intelligible to the mature. A new book, and that the property of the child, has a new interest to him. And now, moreover, my mind was excited to things contained in the Scriptures, in consequence of the recent information I had received concerning the character of God.

I soon found a terrible delight in the perusal of my Testament; for my curiosity was not long in finding that most wonderful of all the books, the Revelation of John. Its narrative character was alluring, and its supernatural incidents and awfully sublime imagery, fastened my whole soul, as if I had been an immediate spectator of the miraculous scenes.

I looked upon every particular in the description, as the literal truth, to be fulfilled in the future. My conceptions of what I read were exceedingly vivid. Some circumstances in the awful representation seemed almost as distinct to my mind's eye, as if I had seen with the vision of the Evangelist. I saw the sun become black, the moon become as blood, the stars fall to the earth, the heaven departing as a scroll, and the mountains and islands moving out of their places, and the men of the earth calling on the mountains and rocks to fall on, and hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. I saw the great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books opened, and the dead judged, and those whose names were unrecorded in

the book of life, cast into the lake of fire. And then, when I beheld the new heaven, and the new earth, and the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, for the blessed to dwell in, I tremblingly wondered whether my name would be written in the Lamb's book of life. All was to me a most fearful reality.

This extraordinary book had probably more influence on my imagination, than anything else I ever read. It confirmed what had been told me before concerning God; and it filled my mind with new images, which for years afterwards were ever associated with his name.

I found a confirmation of these terrific views in other parts of Scripture, where judgment was predicted and wo was pronounced. Those numerous passages which represent the Creator as a father, all love and tenderness towards his children, scarcely attracted my notice, so impressed were my fears with the awful of his character.

My understanding in divine things was still farther darkened at the house of worship; for I was at length freed from my lonely imprisonment on the Sabbath. It was not however by the pastor that I was misled. His countenance was benignant, his manner mild, and the tones of his voice pleasant. The language of his sermons and prayers, I was then hardly old enough to take an interest in, as no one particularly directed my attention to their import.

If there was ever anything unpleasant in his performances, it was when he spoke on those subjects with which I had the most gloomy associations. His was a religion of light and cheerfulness. The sun of righteousness was never darkened, or the glory of God dimmed and dishonored by his teaching. My heart would now have me pen an eulogium, but propriety forbids.

It was from Watts's psalms and hymns, that my early church edification was chiefly derived. I found a pleasure in reading at random, on the two open pages, during the singing of the selected portion. The measurement of the verse and the music of the rhyme had a charm for me. And here my imagination experienced that seducing though terrible excitement, which it found in the descriptions of the sacred volume. The phraseology of Scripture took hold of my mind with a more horrific grasp, when appropriated by the genius of the modern bard, and wrought into easily remembered verse.

From the time that I began to peruse the Scriptures more generally and attentively, and to be acquainted with the above-mentioned psalms and hymns, I entertained a most painful fear of God in the mightier and more striking operations of nature. 'His pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the highest gave his voice; hail-stones and coals of fire. Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings and discomfited them. He made the clouds his chariot, he walked on the wings of the wind. God thundered marvellously with his voice. His lightnings enlightened the world; the earth saw and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.'

Passages like these had a great effect upon my mind, so that the Creator seemed to make use of nature, only to clothe himself with awful majesty, or to execute the purposes of his wrath. The summer, notwithstanding all its teeming delights, was a formidable season to me. Even in the cold opposite winter, I used to anticipate its

alarms. How anxiously did I study the face of the forenoon sky, to divine whether there would be a thunder-shower before night. Most vividly do I recollect the varying aspects of those summer days, and my varying feelings also, as the unfavorable omens gathered or dispersed, or became fulfilled in the dreaded shower. When the light-edged, dark-bodied clouds began to roll into each other in the western sky, and to lift their bold craggy fronts in closer contiguity, then would my pulse begin to beat quick and heavy, and my frame to quake. But when their towering masses began to lose their individuality in one dark blue expanse, and the ear to catch the far off thunder-roll, and the lightning to crinkle along the portentous obscurity, then would my limbs relax and my strength fail. Oh, how have I been almost paralyzed with terror, when the whole heaven has become arched with the black vapor, and the lightning has darted athwart my vision, seemingly in contact with the very eye-ball, and I have felt like a shattered thing in the immediate thunder-crash.

Well might it be terrific, for it seemed the presence and the power of that awful God, ready perhaps to strike my body to death, and snatch my soul to judgment. When the storm was past, and the terror gone, I felt no divine presence in nature's freshened beauty and invigorated life.

Death was to me not only the king of earthly terrors, but it was also a tyrant terror, the idea of it so pursued and possessed my mind, and kept it in the trembling bondage of fear. As long as I might live, I should, indeed, escape that dreadful punishment of the burning lake, of which I had heard. But beyond the grave, all was dark

uncertainty, and I was as likely as any, to be plunged forever into the agonizing flames. O that life, were in duration, as in the days before the flood! The most wretched continuance on earth seemed preferable to an entrance on the world unknown, although there might be a possibility and a hope of heaven. Peculiar circumstances, doubtless, presented the subject with a more appalling aspect to my view.

I lived in the country, where a death makes a more solemn and lasting impression upon the living. The event is more striking, as being less frequent in a scattered population, and more deeply affecting, as the deceased is generally known throughout the town. His departure excites a prevailing seriousness, and a mournful sympathy with the bereaved relations. There is with many of the people a sort of religious pause in their ordinary pursuits, while they attend the solemnity of interment. At the funeral, death seems to be arrayed and surrounded with the insignia and the pomp of his terrific dominion. Here are the sable, the sighs, and the tears of the mourning. Here the trembling prayer is put up to Him who gave, and who hath taken away; who hath clouds and darkness round about him, and righteousness and judgment for the habitation of his throne. Now, the mourners pass along in procession, to take the last look of the dear remains. And then, the sympathizing multitude press around to pay their parting regards. With what shrinking awe did I likewise approach the black enclosure of the dead. The spectacle was fearful. It was the certain evidence that man's body is but dust, and I turned away, dismally realizing that I, too, must die. There lay the familiar form of the well known neighbor.

A little while ago, and I saw him living, active, and happy; now what a change! That awful coffin and the ghastly countenance within, used to haunt my remembrance for months, and in some instances for years. At night on retiring to rest alone, I used to smother myself in the bed-clothes, to hide my eyes from the funereal visions with which my imagination peopled the darkness. Knowing that I was born to die, I used to suffer under the clinging apprehension that I might be cut down in early life, as one or two young acquaintances, and tens of thousands had been. Judgment and eternity were beyond the grave, and was I prepared for them? No; I had not religion, and this I must have or be eternally miserable. I understood by religion, the renouncing of gay amusements, a solemn gravity of demeanor, the making of prayers and joining the church.

How often have I wished that I knew just how long I should live, that I might postpone the gloomy work till the last years or even days of my life. I had the idea that a death-bed repentance would save me. But, alas! the uncertainty of the future was alarming. Still, how could I renounce the joysomeness and the frolic of my boyhood? And then, my young acquaintances, must I separate myself from them, when at school? must I never visit them at their homes, lest I might not maintain the due solemnity of a religious deportment? I could not make these sacrifices. I tremblingly preferred to hazard my soul by living as I had done. I might continue to old age, and then have time enough to prepare for eternity. Or sickness might give me ample warning of the mortal event, so that I could repent and be saved. Sudden death was only one chance out of a thousand; I was willing to risk

this chance, although it was with an abiding anxiety. One thing however I did, which I supposed might be accounted a merit, and serve, in some measure, to secure the favor of heaven. I prayed. On retiring to rest I at first repeated the Lord's prayer. At length I used language of my own. A form was gradually arranged in my mind, from the constant recurrence of the same ideas in my devotions. And often in the day-time, when particularly affected by my meditations, I would steal away to some retirement and make my prayer to God. But the sole cause of my seeming piety, was a slavish fear, an abject shrinking spirit. I used also to read the Bible. This exercise I supposed to have some virtue and saving efficacy in it. I resolved to read the large volume through, from the first word to the last; and this I accomplished. How many times have I reperused chapters of hard names, and to me unintelligible matter, from not being absolutely certain whether I had read them before in my course. When my task was completed, scarcely a deeper impression remained, in respect to very much of the sacred volume, than if I had turned over the leaves with my eyes shut.

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also beheld the tearful eyes, and woful countenances, and heard the heavy sighs of many of the audience, my heart throbbed strangely, and my eyes filled, and I felt, as I thought, symptoms of that conversion, of which I had heard so much said. But the work with me ended in these slight symptoms, and it went not much farther with most others. Our prudent pastor was averse to these extraordinary excitements. He attended conferences, because some of his people would have them, and he must watch his startled flock, lest they should scatter to the sectarian folds in the vicinity. He explained the perplexing scripture, and spoke forth the words of truth and soberness in his mild, persuasive tones. The good man had the religion of Jesus sincerely at heart, but in imitation of the Apostle he would show his people 'a more excellent way.' He inculcated that charity without which all pretended gifts of the spirit are nothing.

Thus the revival, as it was beginning to be called, soon died away; and I escaped a conversion, and a zeal without knowledge, which, perhaps, would have effectually hindered my mind from that calm and simple and beautiful Christianity, in which I now have faith, hope, charity and joy.

I have reflected much on the feelings I entertained at this time, and on the causes which led to them. I have watched the operation of other minds, when under religious excitement. From these reflections and observations, I think that I pretty well understand the nature of revivals. A digression on the subject may not be found useless, at least, to those who are just beginning to judge for themselves what is right. The majority of those educated in the christian faith, have received impressions respecting God and religion, similar to those of my early

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At these conceptions, the audience are stricken with dismay. They have not reasoned much on religious subjects, and all this material imagery, this figurative representation of the Deity and his judgments, has the same effect as if it were literally true. Perhaps the subject may be illustrated by something of a similar nature. Many persons have their memories stocked with frightful stories about ghosts and other strange sights. Now let these be repeated at night, and how will they close round the fireside, and cast fearful glances behind. In this state, it requires but some little uncommon sound to produce pale consternation. Even the intelligent and the philosophic experience something like the same effect, in reading tales of horror. It is imagination that produces the terror. It presents the images of the objects described to view. The ghost or the assassin seems to be lurking in the very vicinity of the hearers or readers; and they almost expect to see strange shapes on looking round. Just so it is with the subjects of revivals.

Imagination presents the images of the things described, with a distinctness almost like that with which realities stand before the material eye. The omniscient Judge seems present, on the throne of his glory, pronouncing the irrevocable doom; and the terrific agents and instruments of his will, seem to appear also, ready to execute the endless tortures that may be adjudged. These ideal forms, when once conjured up from the repose of memory, are, in the time of the excitement, abidingly present to the mental sight. They are still more horrible in sleep; for now, reason has no control. What the wretched beings simply feared, when awake, they seem actually to experience in their dreams. Th

visions of the night are as new warnings, and create a tenfold alarm. Oh, what if my dream should be fulfilled, is the agonizing thought. A gentleman once told me, that after having attended a fanatical meeting, he dreamed that he was writhing in the flames of hell, and his own loud, piercing shrieks awaked him from his seemingly real torments.

Besides these figurative representations appearing as real, another powerful aid to revivals, is that sympathy which always prevails in a community during any unusual excitement of feeling. On the subject of religion, there are many peculiar circumstances, which give to this sympathy an almost resistless influence. All classes of society have an interest in the solemn concern. Differences in rank and age and sex, so important in time, are forgotten, in view of those spiritual distinctions, which shall separate one from another, in eternity. Accordingly, when the great body of minds are all furnished with the predisposing notions, sympathy runs, like the electric fluid, through all of one common nature. Hundreds are often closely crowded into one apartment. Each one not only sees, but often feels the tremblings of his neighbors, in contact. Then there is the sigh, and the tear, and perhaps the groan. Each one perceives, in some at least, the moving tokens of the same feelings with which he is beginning to be affected. Thus sympathy, as it were, passes and repasses from one to another, like an invisible spirit, of restless agency, in the wonderful excitement.

Were I not afraid of digressing too long from my own private experience, which I have set out to relate, I might go on to speak of those principles in human nature, by which a hope is obtained, and rapture rises out of despair; and how the convert, thenceforth, either goes on

his pious, peaceful way, rejoicing, or in a little while becomes more desperately wicked than before. But I must pass these things by, for a few more important considerations, and then return to myself.

It is said that the most hardened and godless sinners are smitten, and become as new creatures. No doubt that many times this is the case. These persons have the same associations with all others. They are excited in the same manner, and with double effect, as they feel themselves to be more wicked, and in more danger than others. They feel that if these things are so, for them indeed, it *is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. And what if they should be snatched immediately to judgment, by sudden death! They are wrought up by imagination and sympathy to the highest possible pitch of terrific excitement. Under these strong impulses, they break the chain of evil habit, and are reformed, to the astonishment of all. But the causes of the change are perfectly natural, as I trust, has been made clear.

Almost all the inhabitants of christian lands have their minds filled with the images and the associations of which I have spoken. But very few of these reason much on religious opinions. The majority receive the figurative representations of Scripture as the literal truth. No wonder that revival preachers produce such tremendous results, with all the poetical machinery of the Scriptures, of religious hymns, of creeds and catechisms, of Milton's Paradise Lost, and of their own invention besides, to wield in their cause. The same preaching would be in vain among the heathen.

As a proof that revivals are produced in the way I have mentioned, I ask the reader to look at the Hindoos *of the present time.* How little effect has the preaching

of Missionaries, on their minds. They have preached for years, concerning this awful God, and his infinite punishments of the unbelieving and the wicked, to very small purpose. The fact is, the Hindoos have no associations in their minds, connected with the figurative imagery of Scripture. All is new to them, and foreign to their usual current of thought and feeling. There is no excitement, no sympathy. It is with them as it would be with us, should they send Missionaries here to convert us to their faith. Should any one attempt to excite among the Hindoos a more devout attention to their own religion, and should array before their imaginations, all the terrors on the one hand, and the delights on the other, of their mythology, no doubt he would produce a pagan revival, very like, in many of its features, to the fanatical tumults which have, from time to time, risen and subsided, in many parts of the christian world. Now, if these last are produced by the influence of the holy spirit, as is pretended, it would matter not whether the subjects of this influence were educated in a pagan or a christian faith. Did not the Apostles make multitudes of converts, in many nations of various and deep-rooted religions — even thousands in a day? They were truly assisted by the spirit. But could modern Gentiles more resist this same spirit, than the ancient? Methinks that it must be most evident to the candid, that the wonder-working power of the great conversions, or revivals of modern times, is sympathetic terror, aided more or less, by various other principles in our natures. This will doubtless be denied, and called blasphemy against the holy ghost, by those who have not studied themselves, who have not found the chain of causes and effects which connects their minds with outward and material things. I do not blame *them. They really* think so. But how can the christian

minister, who has investigated the philosophy of the human mind, who knows what tremendous engines superstition and a common sympathy have been in all ages, how can this educated and enlightened man believe in the supernatural character of revivals?

I have spoken from experience and from observation of the bad effects arising from the figurative representations of the divine punishments. Let it not be supposed, however, from what has been said, that I would disclaim the idea of future retributions for sin. I would have the natural and immutable connexion between vice and misery clearly pointed out. Yet I would have the Creator portrayed not so much the Jehovah of the Old Testament, as the Heavenly Father of the New, whose correcting tenderness should cause his disobedient children to bow their faces with shame and contrition, not hide them with horror and dismay. I would represent Heaven as gently shedding its radiance and its dews on the darkened, petrified heart, to make it fruitful and happy, if it *will* be so, not as preparing lightnings and torrents, to rend asunder, overwhelm and destroy. Let it appear that if we *will* not follow the ceaseless spirit that would lead us, we *must* remain without the kingdom of peace.

There are retributions for sin which result from the constituted nature of matter and mind, and not from the capricious vengeance of this nature's Author and God. These retributions reason finds, conscience feels, and the soul shrinks from. These are terrors of the Lord, which cannot but persuade men, for they are addressed to, and received by the calm understanding; and they cast no shade upon the alluring brightness of the Father's glory.

I trust that it does not appear that I have spoken lightly of the sacred Scriptures. Oh, let it not be supposed that I *think lightly of them*. My remarks have reference to

erroneous impressions, arising from ignorance of the true character and meaning of these writings. I regard the Bible, properly understood, as an unanswerable proof of One Almighty God, perfect in wisdom and love. When religious teachers shall use its contents aright, skeptics will no longer spurn the volume from their hands, no longer open it only to find and ridicule seeming contradictions. They will bend their powers to the study of its dark and strange places, as patiently and candidly as they would to some yet unstudied, unknown portions in the volume of nature. And they shall rejoice to perceive a divine philosophy in the Word, perfectly harmonious with the admired philosophy of the surrounding creation.

I thought it necessary to detain the reader by these cautionary remarks, because one's meaning is so often misconceived and misrepresented concerning important points in dispute.

I now return to my own religious experience. The personal incidents and feelings thus far detailed, occurred previously to my fifteenth year. By the time that I had arrived at this period, my melancholy superstitions began to pass away from my mind. I had a taste for reading, and as my knowledge of books increased, my solitary thoughts flowed in other courses. Religion presented itself to my mind in a new light. Whenever I recurred to it, which was less frequently than before, it was to reason upon, and to doubt, and finally to deny much that I had believed. There was now no particular religious excitement, and there were no other peculiar circumstances to keep early impressions ever fresh in my mind; so that my growing understanding soon perceived their irrationality.

I occasionally heard the suggestions of the skeptic. His queries, which the bigoted could not answer, and his *merriment* at believed absurdities did not cause me to re-

nounce the christian faith, but it had a tendency to banish the subject of religion from my thoughts, as one concerning which there was much uncertainty, and in which it was not particularly necessary that I should perplex my mind. I now almost entirely ceased to peruse the Bible; for although its awful allegories and metaphors were no longer a terror, yet it was a dull, dismal book, from association. I scarcely thought of its richness in the tender, the beautiful, and the grand, on which I might have feasted my taste, if not my feelings of devotion. I had no inclination to return to what was, as it were, a mighty cavern, where I had felt deadly chills, and imagined fearful sights in its darkness, having no guide, no clear light, to show me the solemn splendors of a divinely built temple. This neglect of sacred things, as it happened, had no particularly bad effect upon my morals. I lived in comparative solitude and obscurity, and spent much of my time with books. I had intercourse with but few of the living, so that I remained as pure as ever in my character, from the mere absence of temptation. How often have I shuddered at what might have been my fate, with but a small difference in situation.

During these years, when I slighted religion, put away the Bible, and turned my face from eternity, how might I have been led astray and lost, amid the social excitements and seductions of a village, a college, or a city. I possessed ardent passions, spontaneous sympathy, and a bounding spirit; and with seductive companions at my side, and pleasure in near prospect, how abandoned might I have been! God be praised that at this dangerous period I was surrounded by the simple society of rural life; and that my dearest communion was with the harmless book, and the alluring scenes of nature.

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this chance, although it was with an abiding anxiety. One thing however I did, which I supposed might be accounted a merit, and serve, in some measure, to secure the favor of heaven. I prayed. On retiring to rest I at first repeated the Lord's prayer. At length I used language of my own. A form was gradually arranged in my mind, from the constant recurrence of the same ideas in my devotions. And often in the day-time, when particularly affected by my meditations, I would steal away to some retirement and make my prayer to God. But the sole cause of my seeming piety, was a slavish fear, an abject shrinking spirit. I used also to read the Bible. This exercise I supposed to have some virtue and saving efficacy in it. I resolved to read the large volume through, from the first word to the last; and this I accomplished. How many times have I reperused chapters of hard names, and to me unintelligible matter, from not being absolutely certain whether I had read them before in my course. When my task was completed, scarcely a deeper impression remained, in respect to very much of the sacred volume, than if I had turned over the leaves with my eyes shut.

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years. They have read in the Scriptures before they were able to interpret them aright. They have read of the awful power and the burning vengeance of God. They have dwelt upon the dreadful scenes in the Revelation, and have trembled at the final judgments from the great book of account. Their religious reading and instruction in general, are such as to fasten in their minds the most terrific images. In short, they possess in a greater or less degree, associations similar to those which darkened my own mind, as has been related. These associations arise in the mind whenever God, or religion, is thought on, and cast a shadow and a chill over the spirits.

Now the secret of the revival, I conceive to be this. These associations or remembrances are powerfully excited, are brought before the mind's eye with a renewed and startling vividness.

A preacher addresses an audience on the subject of religion. He portrays their sinfulness in the darkest colors, and the consequent wrath of an offended God. The torments of hell are set forth, the danger of delay is urged, and all in that peculiarly dolorous tone, which has become an established characteristic of religious fanaticism and superstitious fear.

No sooner are these topics thus touched upon, than a host of awful images start up in the minds of the hearers. The preacher generally presents them directly himself. To their kindled imaginations, the last trump now sounds, the end of the world is come, the dead are raised and assembled before the terrible glory of the Infinitely Just. The guilty are condemned, and cast into the burning lake. But I need not further describe; the reader has only to consult his own memory, or cast his eye upon hundreds of religious publications within his

reach, and he will have the picture, as true, and as terrible as I can make it.

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Were I not afraid of digressing too long from my own private experience, which I have set out to relate, I might go on to speak of those principles in human nature, by which a hope is obtained, and rapture rises out of despair; and how the convert, thenceforth, either goes on

his pious, peaceful way, rejoicing, or in a little while becomes more desperately wicked than before. But I must pass these things by, for a few more important considerations, and then return to myself.

It is said that the most hardened and godless sinners are smitten, and become as new creatures. No doubt that many times this is the case. These persons have the same associations with all others. They are excited in the same manner, and with double effect, as they feel themselves to be more wicked, and in more danger than others. They feel that if these things are so, for them indeed, it *is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. And what if they should be snatched immediately to judgment, by sudden death! They are wrought up by imagination and sympathy to the highest possible pitch of terrific excitement. Under these strong impulses, they break the chain of evil habit, and are reformed, to the astonishment of all. But the causes of the change are perfectly natural, as I trust, has been made clear.

Almost all the inhabitants of christian lands have their minds filled with the images and the associations of which I have spoken. But very few of these reason much on religious opinions. The majority receive the figurative representations of Scripture as the literal truth. No wonder that revival preachers produce such tremendous results, with all the poetical machinery of the Scriptures, of religious hymns, of creeds and catechisms, of Milton's Paradise Lost, and of their own invention besides, to wield in their cause. The same preaching would be in vain among the heathen.

As a proof that revivals are produced in the way I have mentioned, I ask the reader to look at the Hindoos of *the present time*. How little effect has the preaching

of Missionaries, on their minds. They have preached for years, concerning this awful God, and his infinite punishments of the unbelieving and the wicked, to very small purpose. The fact is, the Hindoos have no associations in their minds, connected with the figurative imagery of Scripture. All is new to them, and foreign to their usual current of thought and feeling. There is no excitement, no sympathy. It is with them as it would be with us, should they send Missionaries here to convert us to their faith. Should any one attempt to excite among the Hindoos a more devout attention to their own religion, and should array before their imaginations, all the terrors on the one hand, and the delights on the other, of their mythology, no doubt he would produce a pagan revival, very like, in many of its features, to the fanatical tumults which have, from time to time, risen and subsided, in many parts of the christian world. Now, if these last are produced by the influence of the holy spirit, as is pretended, it would matter not whether the subjects of this influence were educated in a pagan or a christian faith. Did not the Apostles make multitudes of converts, in many nations of various and deep-rooted religions — even thousands in a day? They were truly assisted by the spirit. But could modern Gentiles more resist this same spirit, than the ancient? Methinks that it must be most evident to the candid, that the wonder-working power of the great conversions, or revivals of modern times, is sympathetic terror, aided more or less, by various other principles in our natures. This will doubtless be denied, and called blasphemy against the holy ghost, by those who have not studied themselves, who have not found the chain of causes and effects which connects their minds with outward and material things. I do not blame *them. They* really think so. But how can the christian

minister, who has investigated the philosophy of the human mind, who knows what tremendous engines superstition and a common sympathy have been in all ages, how can this educated and enlightened man believe in the supernatural character of revivals?

I have spoken from experience and from observation of the bad effects arising from the figurative representations of the divine punishments. Let it not be supposed, however, from what has been said, that I would disclaim the idea of future retributions for sin. I would have the natural and immutable connexion between vice and misery clearly pointed out. Yet I would have the Creator portrayed not so much the Jehovah of the Old Testament, as the Heavenly Father of the New, whose correcting tenderness should cause his disobedient children to bow their faces with shame and contrition, not hide them with horror and dismay. I would represent Heaven as gently shedding its radiance and its dews on the darkened, petrified heart, to make it fruitful and happy, if it *will* be so, not as preparing lightnings and torrents, to rend asunder, overwhelm and destroy. Let it appear that if we *will* not follow the ceaseless spirit that would lead us, we *must* remain without the kingdom of peace.

There are retributions for sin which result from the constituted nature of matter and mind, and not from the capricious vengeance of this nature's Author and God. These retributions reason finds, conscience feels, and the soul shrinks from. These are terrors of the Lord, which cannot but persuade men, for they are addressed to, and received by the calm understanding; and they cast no shade upon the alluring brightness of the Father's glory.

I trust that it does not appear that I have spoken lightly of the sacred Scriptures. Oh, let it not be supposed that I *think lightly of them.* My remarks have reference to

erroneous impressions, arising from ignorance of the true character and meaning of these writings. I regard the Bible, properly understood, as an unanswerable proof of One Almighty God, perfect in wisdom and love. When religious teachers shall use its contents aright, skeptics will no longer spurn the volume from their hands, no longer open it only to find and ridicule seeming contradictions. They will bend their powers to the study of its dark and strange places, as patiently and candidly as they would to some yet unstudied, unknown portions in the volume of nature. And they shall rejoice to perceive a divine philosophy in the Word, perfectly harmonious with the admired philosophy of the surrounding creation.

I thought it necessary to detain the reader by these cautionary remarks, because one's meaning is so often misconceived and misrepresented concerning important points in dispute.

I now return to my own religious experience. The personal incidents and feelings thus far detailed, occurred previously to my fifteenth year. By the time that I had arrived at this period, my melancholy superstitions began to pass away from my mind. I had a taste for reading, and as my knowledge of books increased, my solitary thoughts flowed in other courses. Religion presented itself to my mind in a new light. Whenever I recurred to it, which was less frequently than before, it was to reason upon, and to doubt, and finally to deny much that I had believed. There was now no particular religious excitement, and there were no other peculiar circumstances to keep early impressions ever fresh in my mind; so that my growing understanding soon perceived their irrationality.

I occasionally heard the suggestions of the skeptic. His queries, which the bigoted could not answer, and his merriment at believed absurdities did not cause me to re-

nounce the christian faith, but it had a tendency to banish the subject of religion from my thoughts, as one concerning which there was much uncertainty, and in which it was not particularly necessary that I should perplex my mind. I now almost entirely ceased to peruse the Bible; for although its awful allegories and metaphors were no longer a terror, yet it was a dull, dismal book, from association. I scarcely thought of its richness in the tender, the beautiful, and the grand, on which I might have feasted my taste, if not my feelings of devotion. I had no inclination to return to what was, as it were, a mighty cavern, where I had felt deadly chills, and imagined fearful sights in its darkness, having no guide, no clear light, to show me the solemn splendors of a divinely built temple. This neglect of sacred things, as it happened, had no particularly bad effect upon my morals. I lived in comparative solitude and obscurity, and spent much of my time with books. I had intercourse with but few of the living, so that I remained as pure as ever in my character, from the mere absence of temptation. How often have I shuddered at what might have been my fate, with but a small difference in situation.

During these years, when I slighted religion, put away the Bible, and turned my face from eternity, how might I have been led astray and lost, amid the social excitements and seductions of a village, a college, or a city. I possessed ardent passions, spontaneous sympathy, and a bounding spirit; and with seductive companions at my side, and pleasure in near prospect, how abandoned might I have been! God be praised that at this dangerous period I was surrounded by the simple society of rural life; and that my dearest communion was with the harmless book, and the alluring scenes of nature.

*After having lived* in this neglect of religious things,

for a few years, my health began to decline, with that well known disorder, the dyspepsia. I had all its alternate hopes, and fears, and horrors. At first, I was in that indefinite state, when one is doubtful whether he is really sick, or only imagines himself so; whether he ought to relax from his pursuits, and take medical care, or plunge into them more deeply, and forget his fancies, and his feelings of illness. In spite of all my exertions to keep up an interest, and a vigor, in my usual avocations, many of my waking hours were spent in melancholy revery; and then my sleep at night was haunted with horrible dreams, which still more tended to weaken my strength, and sadden my spirit, for each succeeding day.

I was at length obliged to withdraw myself from dear pursuits, and to feel the certainty that I was an invalid, and the apprehension that I might never be otherwise in this world. My early religious associations were excited, as I became alarmed for my health. I felt that there still might be a reality in religion, although the subject had been so dreadful to my early mind, and so lightly esteemed for a few years past. I knew that it had given serenity to thousands, in the day of sickness, and peace, and hope, and joy, in the hour of death. I was sick, and needed consolation, and calm. I wanted religion, and I resolved to possess it. Had I now been surrounded by gloomy zealots, seizing on this peculiar season to terrify me into their doctrinal thraldom, I know not but that they might have succeeded; might have taken and bound me, in my weakness and my want. But as it happened, nothing was said to me on the subject. My friends and neighbors saw my sallow countenance, and shrunken form, and whispered to each other of consumption, and death. But a tenderness for my feelings, or an awe of

the theme, prevented their making the most distant allusion to it, in my presence, at the time.

I communed with myself alone, on solemn subjects; and these, more than anything else, now engrossed my reflections. I was at my native home, in that rural separation from neighboring inhabitants, which is favorable to meditation. I had but little intercourse with others, and scarcely any with books, for I found reading to be an injury; and I had nothing to do but let my thoughts flow as they would. At first, I was painfully unsettled and doubtful. I seemed as one tossed to and fro in a dusky vacuum, where I could find no firm resting-place, and was ever shrinking back from the fancied phantoms of the obscurity.

I soon however became happily clear, and calm, and assured, in my views. While thus seeking religious truth for the first time, I wandered among what I believed to be the fairest works of the Creator, the environs of my own native home. Amid these I had rambled in past years, led by that spirit of poetry and romance, which I had caught from the genius of books. Here now I contemplated, and, for the first time, enjoyed the presence of the Framer of nature, and the Father of spirits. To me, he now seemed the source of all good. Could the Being who fashioned these features of the landscape so beautifully, could he be anything but merciful and lovely? It was in the summer, and all living things around me seemed rejoicing under the mild influences of the season. God is most surely good, thought I. His tender mercies are indeed over all his works; else why is this beauty, and bounty, and manifest enjoyment? I re-opened the Scriptures. My eye now fell upon, and my soul delighted in, passages that were scarcely noticed before. My mind had been excited with gratitude to the Creator, from the

contemplation of his admirable works, and now, when I selected portions of holy writ, for my reading and meditation, I yet seemed to repose in green pastures, and to be led beside the still waters. I had such a sense of God, in the abundance of his blessings, that I scarcely thought of that terrible majesty and dominion, at which I trembled in childhood. My acquaintance with the principles of literature, enabled me to understand that those material representations were figures of language, such as were usual with poetic minds, particularly those of the earlier ages of the world. There were still, however, in the sacred record, many things which were mysterious and awful; but I supposed that, with a proper acquaintance with the circumstances under which these things were written, all would appear in delightful harmony with those evidences of love, with which all nature was full. For is not the whole material universe a revelation of the divine character, a scripture of truth, as well as the volume of the Word? And what are a few uninterpreted verses of inspiration, compared with that plenitude of proof, which all can understand, and which equally proceeded from the finger divine? Why then should not I love this loveliest of beings?

But it was not merely nature, nor the Bible alone, that I studied, to gain a knowledge of God, and attain a religious spirit. I studied my own experience. I beheld, in that series of circumstances by which my life had been influenced, a divinely-laid plan. How generously had some valuable principles of my nature been nurtured; how wisely some exuberant tendencies been restrained, How many evils had I not escaped; what good had I not received. My Father in heaven seemed ever to have been leaning watchfully over me, with tender, though *chastening love.*

I had been afflicted more sorely, I thought at the time, than most others of my age; but now I felt the truth of the Scripture, that affliction cometh not forth of the dust; neither doth trouble spring out of the ground. The evils of my lot seemed plainly the descending influences of Heaven, to produce in my fallow soul those fruits of the spirit, love, joy, gentleness and faith.

The gospel, whose meaning I never realized before, was most truly a gospel to me now; glad tidings, that I was the care of One, infinite in love. How rich was the language of Jesus, in consolation and encouragement! Although it was in those distant and strange ages that he spoke, yet his words came to my newly interested mind with an efficacy, as if I had caught them from his own living tongue. Did not I, as well as the immediate disciples, behold the fowls of the air, which gather not into barns, yet are fed, and the flowers of the field, which toil not, nor spin, yet are so beautiful? And was not I, the Father's immortal offspring, much better than they? Surely the hairs of my head are also numbered, and shall not fall unnoticed to the ground; and shall I be found one of the little in faith? Let me seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and the needed things of this life shall be added thereto.

But it was not to the uttered precept alone that I looked, to inspirit my soul, and light me to the kingdom. I looked unto Jesus himself. I contemplated his own perfect example. Was he not a man of suffering and sorrows? yet how perfect his resignation! His Father had appointed his difficult and painful way in the world; and did he turn aside from his course? Let me likewise pursue my appointed path with determination and trust to the end.

Besides this new piety towards God which I had acquired, I also gained clearer and more impressive views of my duty to my fellow creatures around. I had kind affections before. I was ready to do good when there was a call upon my sympathy. But I had not considered myself as connected with all that is human, by the tie of a common relationship. I had not felt that the world was one great household, wherein a sense of a common Father's love should bind all together in fraternal unity. Jesus was my instructer in this. I need not repeat his precepts, for all who will read this, have read them. They were certain lights to all my future paths, wherever they might lead me, among men. But his own personal example was a still more glorious aid. Here was the perfection of precept, illustrated by the perfection of practice. Here I had certain evidence that one, with like affections with myself, could feel a most tender interest even in his most bitter enemies. And could not I do the same? I saw the example, felt my ability — I could not mistake my duty.

In the mission, the character, and the teaching of Jesus, it scarcely entered my thoughts that there was anything mysterious and perplexing. I was by myself, free and uninfluenced by the fallible. I wanted to know my duty, to do it, and to be happy. In Jesus I beheld it plainly taught and exemplified. The great all-embracing doctrines of love to God, and love to man, I clearly understood. I felt them to be true and necessary. They possessed my whole soul, to the exclusion of all inferior considerations. These principles put in practice, must, in the eternal nature of things produce purity, and peace, and happiness in this life; they must in the eternal nature of things, prepare for happiness in the life to come. To be *like Jesus, be*nevolent, doing good to all; to be like God.

universal in love, was to partake of the perfections of the Son and the Father; it was to participate also in their holy, heavenly felicity. Religion was no dark path to me now. Why should it be dark? The light of God's goodness was reflected on it from all his creations, and his providence. Jesus, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, went before me in the same, as a guide. I could not turn my eyes from so distinct and glorious a vision. I was surrounded with light, I followed light. It was a way of plainness, and pleasantness, and peace.

My health was still infirm, and uncertain; but I felt no anxiety. I was resigned to live, or die unto the Lord. Thy will be done. Why should I not feel and cherish, and act upon the sentiment? Was it not the will of Infinite wisdom and love?

I cannot but mention one glorious summer evening, it is so delightful a remembrance to my mind. There was a violent shower, like those which had been such a terror to me, in my childhood. Since that period I had studied and admired the divine contrivances in nature; and now I experienced the calm trust of religion. I most deeply realized the great and delightful change that had come over my mind. God seemed now to make the clouds his chariot, and to walk upon the wings of the wind; but it was to make visitings of mercy to the earth; it was that his paths might drop fatness, and the year be crowned with good. God thundered marvellously with his voice; but it was the same paternal voice, breathed so still and small in calmer nature, now raised to its mightier eloquence, to persuade of his presence and his love. 'The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice.' I felt the Psalmist's sentiment to the full. If ever my soul was lifted to the sublime of devotion, it was then.

When the rain was over, I went forth, as would any lover of nature, to enjoy the most glorious of all scenes, the earth, and sky, at sunset, after a summer shower. But I now went forth as a lover of nature's God. I ascended an eminence where I had stood a thousand times, in earlier life, to let a romantic eye feast upon the rich variety of prospect. I stood and beheld now as one who lived, and moved, and had his being, not merely in this fair inanimate creation, but also in the living, adorable Creator. In the very striking scene I surveyed, he seemed to present to my view the emblems of my experience. That eastern cloud, with its departing gloom, dying thunders, and sun-gilt rear, seemed like my first dark and terrific views, which the light of reason now illustrated, and made pleasant to my contemplation, as they passed away from my mind. The thousand splendors which now shone around, were as the joyful illuminations of truth upon my mind. In my present happy frame, with a clear understanding and a glowing heart, it was delightful to trace a resemblance between the light of my soul and the resplendency of nature.

There was a divine providence in these influences of the seasons, and was there not the same tender providence in the influences of my life? 'Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God. For of him, and to him, and through him, are all things.' God was all in all. I seemed to repose in the cherishing bosom of the all-surrounding Divinity. If in this outward, sensual world I could so realize him, what might not be my instant blessedness, could the frame of clay but fall at once from my rapt spirit? I could not but be in heaven. I almost wished to depart. I had been so long withdrawn from worldly pursuits, that I had almost lost my interest in them; and I had so long almost exclusively contem-

plated heavenly things, here in my solitude, that heave nly places in Christ Jesus seemed more congenial to my spirit, than the earthly places from which I had for a while retired. But there was now a probability of my restoration to health, and I must then go back to the world, and its pursuits. Be it even so. I was prepared to mingle more than ever with my fellow beings; for the religion I had received, was not given from above so much for solitude, as for society, Jesus went about doing good; I would be like him. As his disciple I was ready to present my body a living sacrifice unto God, in whatever way his providence should appoint. The peace of God which passeth all understanding, seemed now to keep my mind and heart.

Let not the reader, however, suppose that this christian light and calm came with a steady and untroubled progress over my soul. From the melancholy nature of my disorder, I had many sad apprehensions and dark hours, especially at first. But these were nothing compared with my agonizing compunctions for sin. Had I not lived for years without God in the world? Although I had imbibed gloomy and repulsive notions of his character in early life, yet when these passed from my mind, there was no need of my banishing all thoughts of God. I still felt his existence and his power, but I paid my devotions to idols of my own vain desires and imaginations. I knew of the most merciful Father, yet I had sought no blessing, had poured no gratitude, had kept from him my heart; and I was now bowed with shame, agitated with remorse. Often did the throbbings, and the gushings of penitence overwhelm my soul. But I sought for forgiveness; most earnestly I sought it, in the filial, christian way. I relied upon the tender promises of which the Scripture is full. I felt that a broken heart, a contrite

spirit, and newness of life would insure me forgiveness; and at length I attained the composure, the confidence, and the joy of which I have spoken.

My health, in the autumn, began steadily to improve; and I began to think of the world and its affairs again. But I trust that my anticipations, though bright and ardent, from the nature of my temperament, were, nevertheless, chastened and led by the spirit of Christianity. My sickness had been as a solemn sanctuary, wherein I had confessed my sins, received an unction, and made a covenant with God. I was now ready for the open performance of my secret vows.

There was one imperious christian duty yet to be done. It was to acknowledge Christ before men, and partake of the memorials of his love. I saw no reasons for delay. How delightfully had my views of this act been changed, since my early life. I then looked upon it with trembling awe. I considered members newly received to the communion, as giving up their interest in this life, and henceforth devoting themselves to austerity and gloom. Next to the gates of the grave, those of the church were most dreadful of approach. I felt nothing of this chill and cheerlessness now. For what was it to sit at the rite of the supper? It was to partake of emblems, simply to remind me of Jesus. "This do in remembrance of me," were his words, and why should I not remember him? Was it not most delightful to do so? Could there be but peace and joy in recalling him to mind, who had come from the bosom of the Father, to bring peace and joy to the world? Did he not give himself for me? Did he not die that I might live? What could be darker ingratitude, than a neglect of the simple rite he instituted for his followers, just before his tortures and death for their good? Did not Jesus come, moreover, to set an example, that

man might imitate, and be happy? How important then that all means should be embraced, to recall the perfect model, that the imperfect might grow into a likeness thereto. Blessed institution, adapted to the wants of sensual, forgetful man! Happy those who make use of its aid!

Oh, it was an ever-memorable day, that solemn but cheerful Sabbath, in which I joined myself to the church of Christ in my native town. My mind could not but be thronged with thoughts; reviews of the past, high resolves for the future; all the affecting and sublime considerations of a divine religion; faith, hope, charity; man, and Christ, and God; heaven and eternity. My soul was so possessed with these great and solemn subjects, that I was scarcely conscious of what otherwise I might have shrunk from, the pursuing, fastening gaze of the whole congregation, as I moved up the central aisle, and stood before the covered table of communion, and my venerable pastor, to assent to the brief and simple form of admission to his church. His voice trembled, and his eye was moistened with unusual tenderness, as he spoke the words of reception to fellowship, and engaged to pray for, and watch over me, and asked my prayers and watching in return. I was the only young man he had thus received, for years, and it seemed as if he felt a more than pastoral, even a paternal affection for one who had alone, and unasked, entered into this new relation so interesting to his office.

As the congregation retired, leaving me for the first time in the midst of communicants, most of them much my elders, I felt a sense of solitariness in the service, which should not be in the memorial of Him who would comprehend all in the bonds of fraternal love. Had the young who had all gone away, no gratitude, no desires after wisdom and purity, and that perfection of character

which religion sets forth? But I had charity for the absent, for I well knew the reasons of their neglect, from the remembrance of my own early views.

When I met some of my youthful acquaintance afterward, on the same day, there was a strangeness in their looks towards me, as if I was not the same being as before. Was it because I was no longer among the young, and had lost all my sympathy with the age? I endeavored to manifest by a cheerful serenity and a lively interest in their society, that I had not lost the vivacity and the freshness of youth, notwithstanding I had sat down with their parents in the solemnity of the sacrament.

Soon after this I left my native home, no longer to consider it as my own proper place of abode. I exchanged its quiet seclusion for new and strange and more crowded scenes. I was now to meet the populous, trying, and tempting world. But I trust that I had an armor of God, the preparation of the gospel of peace. I had embraced what is called Liberal Christianity; and I can with truth say, that it had great influence in keeping me unspotted from the world, and steadfast amid its changes. I have since lived some years, and been in various situations. I have been disappointed in plans, have buried the beloved, have been sick and near death myself, and my religion has never failed to alleviate, cheer, and sustain. I have read and thought much, but my peculiar views have not changed, except as the dawn changes in spreading and brightening toward the perfect day.

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# MR TUCKERMAN'S

# TENTH SEMIANNUAL REPORT,

AS A

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"The system which produces the happiest *moral effects*, will be found most beneficial to the interest of the individual, and to the general weal. Upon this basis the science of political economy will rest at last, when the ponderous volumes by which it has been overlaid, shall have sunk by their own weight into the dead sea of oblivion." — *Southey's Essays.* Vol. I. pp. 181, 182.

"The gentlest method which I know, and at the same time one of the most effectual of the methods, of stopping the progress of vice, is *by removing the temptations to it.*" — *Fielding's* "*Causes of the Increase of Robbers.*" Works, Vol. X. p. 351.

"It is the misfortune of this country, (England) and it has been the calamity, and may prove the destruction of Ireland, that *the different classes of society have not a sufficient bond and connexion of intercourse.*" — *Sir Thomas Barnard, on the Education of the Poor*, p. 60.

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# REPORT.

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To the Executive Committee of the

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

GENTLEMEN, — The term poverty, as I have used it in my Reports, signifies a dependence upon charity for the means of subsistence. I consider no one, therefore, in the strict sense of the term, as poor, who is not thus dependent; and every one who thus depends on charity, during the time of this dependence, and in the degree of it, is poor. In view of this definition, in my Report of May 5th, 1830, I divided the poor into three classes. 1st, those who are only occasionally, and partially poor. 2d, those who are frequently, and considerably poor. And, 3d, those who are constantly, and absolutely poor. Between these general divisions, I observed, that there are examples of every supposable degree, and kind of poverty; and I brought before you such examples as I could, within the limits I must prescribe to myself, of the character and condition of each of these classes of the poor among us. My only object, however, then was, to expose the injustice of the sentiment which is sometimes formed of the whole of the poor, from the specimens which we see abroad as vagrants, or which come to our

houses for broken food, or which are generally found in alms-houses. But there are other, and not less important classifications to be made of this great department of our fellow beings, if we would think correctly, or act wisely, or justly respecting them. I cannot, however, proceed to the classification which I would now offer, without pausing to bring the consideration distinctly and strongly before my own mind, that I am about to classify, in some respects at least with a view to mere pecuniary calculations respecting the charge of them, not creatures of another and a lower nature than our own, but our equals in natural rights; our fellow immortals; the children, equally with ourselves, of him whom we call "our Father in heaven;" and some who are our superiors, it may be, in all which constitutes excellence in the sight of God. I would therefore think of them, in every step of my way, with the respect, and interest, and affection which are due to them, in view of our common origin, our consequent relation to each other, and our common infirmities, exposures, defects, and final accountableness. I would not, indeed, while thinking of our duties in respect to the poor, forget the duties of the poor to themselves, and to society; for it is no part of charity to minister to idleness, and recklessness, and vice. But, in truth, never shall we do anything which will avail much for the remedy, or the prevention of pauperism, or of crime, or even for the relief of the most pressing wants of those who stand most in need of the relief we can give them, till we strongly feel the sentiment of a common nature with them, and are brought to act upon the broad principles at once of christian justice, and of christian humanity.

"The condition of man," says Colquhoun, "is susceptible of four material distinctions. First, that of utter inability to procure subsistence. Second, that of inadequate ability. Third, that of adequate ability, and no more. Fourth, that of extra ability, which is the ordinary state of man, and is the source of wealth." * The

* Colquhoun has made three classes of the "causes of indigence." The first class he designates, "causes of indigence irremediable." The second, "remediable indigence, requiring props to raise it to a state of poverty." The third, "culpable causes of indigence." — "*Poverty*," he says, "is that condition of society, where the individual has no surplus labor in store, and, consequently, no property but what is derived from constant industry in the various occupations of life. Or, in other words, it is the state of every one who must labor for subsistence." — "*Indigence*," he defines to be "that condition in society, which implies *want*, *misery* and *distress*. It is the state of any one who is destitute of the means of subsistence." (Treatise on Indigence, pp. 7, 8.) I quote these definitions, because, without them, this classification would hardly be intelligible. I am not satisfied, however, with this distinction between indigence and poverty, or with this definition of *poverty*. An individual is not poor, and should not be thought to be poor, who by his or her industry, in any of the occupations of life, can and does obtain the means of subsistence. Nor is a family to be considered as poor, the wants of which are met either by its head, or by the united exertions of its members, without appealing to charity. Such a family, or such an individual, by sickness, or other causes, may in a short time be brought to poverty, or to a dependence on charity. And so also may the most affluent individual, or the most affluent family. But as long as any shall actually provide for their own necessities, though compelled to daily labor to make this provision, they are not poor. This distinction between those who can, and do, and those who do not, and cannot provide for their own wants, is, I think, important. There are not a few who labor very hard for self-support, and who live by their own labors, though indeed sometimes called to painful privations, who

poor are comprehended in the two first of these divisions. The two last comprehend those who have a competency, and the rich. This classification, however, is too general. Fielding * divides the poor into "three classes. First, those who are unable to work. Second, those who are able and willing. And, third, those who are able and not willing." Of the last of these classes it is very clear, that society has a right to oblige them to do as much work, as will give a fair compensation for their support. The right is quite as perfect to authorize a justice of the peace, or a civil court, to send one who is living, and who shows a determination to live upon charity, while he *can*,

are perhaps excited to industry by no circumstance more strongly, than by a dread of being ranked with the poor, by falling into a state of dependence on charity. Let such persons be considered, and treated, as if they belong to the great division of the poor, and you will chill this spirit of industry. You will unnerve the arm which was strong for toil, and open for charity the hand which has been clenched against it.

I am glad of this opportunity, and I will not let it pass, to pay the tribute of my very high respect to the memory of Colquhoun, who, while he was exceeded by no one in his fidelity as a magistrate, appears, in the discharge of his official duties, never to have lost his sympathy with human weakness and want, and his deep interest in the moral recovery of the vicious. The police of cities has suffered from nothing so much, as from the want of this sympathy and this interest in its officers. The wisest civil regulations that can be devised will avail but little for the advancement of society, if the magistrates who execute them look not beyond the letter of their commission, and fail to communicate what they learn of the causes, the remedy, and the prevention of crime; and if the agents whom they employ as their ministers of justice, are scarcely, in moral character, raised above the culprits who are brought before them.

* See "Causes of the Increase of Robbers &c." Fielding's Works, Vol. x. p. 388.

but *will not* work, to a House of Employment, as to send a drunkard to a House of Correction. And well would it be for our community, and for every community, and well also for the obdurately indolent poor themselves, if this right were not only legalized, but if its exercise were demanded by public opinion. Surely, a broad distinction should be made between those who *will*, uncompelled, do nothing for their own support, and those who are poor while they are actually availing themselves of every means which they have, and of every opportunity, for self-subsistence. In respect to those who are poor, and *cannot* work, there is, and can be in fair minds, no doubt of our duty. It may indeed be a question difficult of solution, "how may we most wisely provide for them?" But, provide for them we must, or we are guilty before God. But these divisions of Fielding are also too general. They overlook, or come short of, some of the most important distinctions in regard to poverty, and the poor. They give no light on some of the most important questions which arise upon these subjects.

I would divide the poor, then, into four classes.

In the *first* class I would place those who are *irremediably* and *innocently poor;* who have been made poor by causes beyond their own control.

The *second* class comprehends those whose poverty is *remediable*, and who, like those of the first class, are *innocently poor.*

The *third* class includes those who are *remediably poor*, but *poor by their own fault.*

The *fourth* class consists of those whose poverty is *irremediable*, and is to be ascribed to *their own misconduct.*

I do not offer these as a substitute for all other classifications of the poor. Far otherwise. But I think that they will do something to aid us in conceiving more justly of the condition and character of the poor; of the character of their claims, and of our specific duties in regard to them. And it is not a small good that is obtained, if the obscurity of our views of these great subjects is even so far diminished, that we are encouraged more earnestly and perseveringly to endeavor to comprehend them.

Here let me add a word of explanation, before I adduce examples of those who are to be placed in these several divisions.

In speaking of those who are *innocently poor*, and of those who are *poor by their own fault*, or their own misconduct, I would be understood to refer only to the immediate, or personal causes of the poverty of the individuals, who become objects either of private, or of public bounty. Many are made poor by the heedlessness, the recklessness, or the guilt of others, who are yet themselves, as far as their poverty is concerned, entirely innocent. This is a consideration not to be lost sight of; for it would manifestly be most unjust to treat the innocent as if they were guilty; and it would be equally injurious to themselves, and to society, to treat the guilty as if they were innocent. — Secondly, I would remark, that *innocence*, and *guilt*, as I here use them, are relative, and comparative terms. Not only may an individual be very far from innocence, in view of his general character, while yet he may be innocent with respect to the circumstances which have brought him to poverty; but it is important also to understand, that there are very different degrees of moral evil in the circumstances, to

which the poverty of individuals is immediately to be ascribed. To act justly, therefore, in regard to the individual, and wisely in respect to society, we must maintain a perpetual reference to this diversity of circumstance, and of character. — I must observe also, that some qualification is to be made of the terms *remediable*, and *irremediable*. There is, indeed, a poverty which is absolutely irremediable, and which no foresight, and skill, and provision can prevent, because its causes are wholly beyond human control. Examples of this poverty will be found in the first of the classes into which I shall divide the poor. But there is also a poverty, which is irremediable with respect to the individuals suffering under it, while yet much may be done to prevent the action of its causes upon others. Examples of this kind may be found in the second of the following classes. And there is also a great extent of poverty in the classes, in which I consider it to be remediable, in which, as in many diseases, it is remediable in very different degrees; in some cases. entirely, and in others very partially. There is also a poverty, from which the individuals suffering under it cannot, unaided, recover themselves, while yet they may be recovered from it by others, or be brought by others into a condition in which they may provide amply for a comfortable subsistence. — With these preliminary observations in view, I proceed to illustrate the classifications which I have suggested of the poor, with respect to the kinds of poverty, and to its moral character.

The first of the classes to which I have referred, consists of those who are *irremediably*, and *innocently* poor; who have been made poor by *causes beyond their*

*own control;* or who are poor, in the phrase of law, "*by the act of God.*" Who are they?

I answer, 1st, those who are *incurably insane*, either from a constitutional tendency to mental derangement, or simply from disease, or from a bodily injury which has befallen them, or who are made insane by adversity, or by some other great affliction, or by any cause for which the individual is not himself culpable, and who, by their insanity, are brought to a permanent dependence on charity for the means of their subsistence. Irremediable poverty is indeed a necessary consequence of incurable insanity with every one, who, while sane, could only make provision for the passing day, or week; or, who was even then occasionally, and partially dependent for support upon the hand of charity. There are poor of this class in families, in insane hospitals, and even in prisons. The richest of the incurably insane will, indeed, in one sense, be as dependent for life on charity, as the poorest of his fellow beings who is suffering under the same dreadful malady. But the cost to be incurred for the charge of one in this condition who is rich, is paid from his own resources. Though wholly incapable, therefore, of appropriating these resources for his own support, he is not poor. But he to whom no such resources are left in a case of incurable insanity, must be permanently provided for either by public, or by private bounty. And if he have not brought this insanity upon himself by folly, or by vice, he has a legal right to a comfortable provision for his maintenance, on the principle, that "the act of God injures no man." His *right* to support from the care and kindness of others is as perfect, as is the right of

the insane rich man to support from his own property.*

* I cannot here discuss the question, of *the rights of the poor*. But I would invite attention to it. There is often great vagueness, and not unfrequently great injustice, in the sentiments of men upon this subject. "A poor man," says Paley, (Philosophy, pp. 82, 83,) "has a right to relief. Yet, if it be refused him, he must not extort it. — He has a right to relief from the rich. But the mode, the season, the quantum of relief, and who shall contribute it, are not ascertained." Let these qualifications be admitted, — and I fully admit them, — and what do they imply? Imperfection either in the right of the poor, or in the corresponding obligations of the rich? No. They do, however, imply a right in the rich to judge for themselves respecting the mode, the season, the quantum of relief, and how much each one is bound himself to contribute. But the obligation thus to judge, and to judge justly in the case, and to act in conformity to this judgment is a perfect obligation. Let this obligation be felt, and acted upon, and the rights of the poor will be better understood, and better secured, than they could be by any legal definitions, or legal enactments. By the poor, as well as by the rich, rights may be forfeited. But how are rights forfeited except by wrong doing? And, in any case in which they are forfeited, the question is of great importance, to what extent? A criminal, who has forfeited his life to the laws, is not considered to have forfeited his right to food, clothing and shelter, while the laws shall permit him to live. Who, indeed, would not cry out against the injustice, as well as against the inhumanity, of refusing food to a hungry criminal? And why, but because his necessity, and his inability to provide for his wants, give him a right to food from the common stock of others? Has not *an innocently poor person*, then, in proportion to *his* inability, a right to a comfortable support from others, which is quite as absolute as is the right by which any property is held in society? I would bring these inquiries to the test of the original principles of the social compact, and to the generally acknowledged principles of civil justice; and I am willing, as far as legislation is concerned, here to leave decisions respecting the rights of the poor. Let legislators, and the community, in view of these principles, "render to all their due," and there will be a vast

2d. In this class are to be placed those who are born idiots, or who, from causes beyond their control, have fallen into idiocy, and whose immediate relatives are unable to provide for their support. *Their* right also to a provision by others, either public or private, which shall be adequate to a suitable care of them, and to their comfortable maintenance, is as perfect as the right by which any of us hold any one of our possessions. Is it not? And if not, why?

Again. Here are to be placed those, who, though not idiots, are yet either naturally, or through accident, or disease, obviously so deficient in capacity for self-direction, and even for any useful service, that they cannot profitably be employed by others; and, neither possessing the means by which they may be supported, nor connected with near relatives who are able to support them, must be provided for by charity. They are made irremediably poor by this irremediable deficiency of intellectual power; and they are innocent in respect to their poverty, or dependence, because they are innocent in respect to the cause of it. The poverty of some who are

diminution of human suffering, and sin. It is the doctrine of Malthus on this subject, that "we are bound in honor and justice *formally to disclaim the right* of the poor to support;" that they have "*no claim of right* on society for the smallest portion of food, beyond that which their own labor would fairly purchase;" and that, "if this system were pursued, we need be under no apprehensions that the number of persons in extreme want would be beyond the power and will of the benevolent to supply."—If Mr Malthus, or any of his descendants should ever be poor, God grant that their claims may never be left for decision with the receivers of his system of Political Economy!—*Malthus' Essay*, Vol. iii. pp. 179, and 181, 182.

intellectually very deficient, may, indeed, be but partial, because, under the direction of others, they may be made in some degree to contribute to their own subsistence; and, as far as any may be found who can thus compensate society, or their friends for their maintenance, they are remediably poor, and are to be placed in the second class. In regard to these, society has a right to claim, and to appropriate, whatever capacity they may have of contributing to their own maintenance. But in proportion to the intellectual deficiency which has thrown any upon the charity of others, their claims to the interest and support of others are perfect. They may not be innocently disregarded.

Again. There are those of this class who are born cripples, or who are so far maimed, or are so much diseased, or are otherwise so much enfeebled and broken, and without any fault of their own, that they are incapable of providing for their own necessities. They may have quite a sufficiency of intellectual capacity, and the best disposition to keep themselves from all unnecessary dependence on charity. It may even be, and I have known it to be, that this disposition has led to efforts for self-support, which have produced a greatly aggravated and protracted suffering, from the very infirmity which has disabled them. Here, then, likewise, are rightful claims. These claims will indeed generally be asserted with modesty, in proportion to the innocence of the sufferer who may adduce them. But shall we therefore be justified in failing to recognise and to answer them?

Again. There are those, who, having supported themselves by honest labor, but having been unable to make any considerable provision for the future, are gradually

brought to dependence by the increasing infirmities of old age. There are aged men, and aged women of this description, who are worthy of high respect, and of a generous sympathy with their sufferings and wants. They have done what they could do, and they can now do no more. They must be poor till they die. But as they are not blamable for their poverty, they must not be *punished* for it. In other words, they should not be treated as if they were vicious, by refusing any other provision for them than one which will class, and connect them, with the notoriously vicious.

There are indeed those of each of these descriptions of our fellow beings, who are to be found in the affluent, and in the middling classes of society. But whatever may be the dependence of such individuals upon their friends, who are able to provide for them, they are not to be classed among the poor. Their place is with those of the family, or circle, of which they are a part; and no obligation of life is generally, in the abstract at least, felt to be stronger, than that of near relatives, when they are able to do it, willingly and adequately to provide for those, who, by the act of God, are thus disqualified to provide for themselves. And is the obligation less perfect, where a competent provision for individuals such as these cannot be made by their relatives, that it should be made for them by others? The question is a very important one, where, in these cases, lies the responsibility? This question, however, I leave for the present.

The *second* of the classes I have named consists of those, who, like those of the first class, are *innocently poor;* but whose poverty, unlike theirs, to a great ex-

tent at least may be remedied, and for all practical purposes is in every case to be considered as *remediable*. This is also a class of the poor whose claims upon our charity are unequivocal; for, like those of the first class, they, also, are poor "*by the act of God.*" In any measure, therefore, or provision for them, their innocence should be distinctly recognised.

In the first division of this class I would place *the deaf and dumb.** A few years only have passed, since it would have been necessary to have placed this very interesting portion of our fellow beings in the first class which I have named of the poor. But the new language of signs, which is now taught in asylums for the deaf and dumb, has brought them into a new connexion with the speaking part of our race. In these asylums, also, they are taught the arts, and trades, by which they may provide amply, and honorably, for their own subsistence. These institutions, which are worthy of universal patronage, have most deservedly obtained the fostering care of more than one of the governments of our States; for they are direct and efficient means, not only of saving their inmates from pauperism, and thus from a greatly prolonged dependence on public provision for their support, but of a very great advancement of human virtue and happiness.

In the second division of this class we may place *the blind.* It is not a very long while since we should have been compelled to have classed these also among the ir-

* According to the last census, the number of deaf and dumb persons in the United States was, 5,363; and of the blind, 5,444. Boston Daily Advertiser, September 4th, 1832.

remediably poor. But not only has it been ascertained that many, who would once have been considered, and treated, as incurably blind, may be restored to sight, but that by means of an asylum for those whose eyes no skill can open, they, like the deaf and dumb, may be taught the arts and trades, by which they may be secured from an otherwise inevitable dependence for their support upon the bounty of others. There are asylums for the blind in Paris, in Edinburgh, in Liverpool, &c; and I heartily congratulate our fellow citizens upon the prospect we have of a similar institution in our own city. It is not an experiment which is now for the first time making among us, of the practicability, to a very considerable extent, of enabling the blind to provide for their own support by their own labors. It is a well established fact, that there are important mechanic arts which can not only be practised by the blind, but in which the blind may even be instructers of the blind. May God speed the enterprise, which has for its object so excellent a charity! *

* The New England Asylum for the Blind, in Boston, was instituted in February, 1829. It was opened for the reception of pupils about the middle of the last August. Dr S. G. Howe is its superintendent; and he has not only qualified himself for the service by visiting the best asylums for the blind in Europe, but he has with him a very able blind teacher of the blind, who came with him from Paris for the purpose of being an instructor in Boston. There are now four male, and three female pupils in the school; and they have already given very satisfactory evidences of the usefulness of the institution. The permanent fund for its support is now about $3000; and it receives from $2000, to $2500 a year, by a grant of the Legislature, which appropriated to this asylum whatever surplus might annually be uncalled for of the grant made

Another division in this class consists of the *curably insane*, in whom their malady is the result of causes be-

for the education of the deaf and dumb in the State. There are, however, many applicants for this charity, who, from the inadequacy of its means of supporting them, are necessarily excluded from it.

In this connexion, I beg leave to express my sense of the great importance and value of one of the most interesting, and at the same time one of the least patronized, of our institutions for the relief of suffering humanity; I mean, "the Massachusetts Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary." It is very common with me, as I pass from house to house among the poor, to see the young, as well as the aged, — parents and children, — suffering grievously from affections of the eyes; and, but for this Infirmary, unspeakably aggravated would be their sufferings. But there they go for relief; and there they are actually relieved from diseases, which otherwise might have been of an indefinite continuance; and, in not a few cases, might have brought on a total blindness. It is, in truth, a matter of very great surprise, that after the publication, and distribution of the reports of this institution, in which we are told that about 700 individuals have annually gone to it for the advice and aid of its physicians; that from its commencement, in the autumn of 1824, there have been five thousand three hundred and sixty applicants for this charity; of the comparatively small number of cases in which their diseases have been incurable; of the cases of recovery from total blindness; and, of the large numbers who have there been restored to the use, and the enjoyment of their sight, who might otherwise have suffered from a diseased vision through their lives; — and, when it is considered, that those who are so relieved there are of the class who depend on their daily labors for their daily subsistence; that many of them are females, whose diseases of the eyes have been induced by their severe labors as seamstresses, for the very purpose of escaping a dependence on charity for their support; and that many are the children of the poor, who, by a loss of their sight, may have no refuge from irremediable poverty, but in an asylum for the blind; it is indeed very surprising, in view of these unquestionable facts, that, in our benevolent com-

diately *attributable to vice*, is yet *remediable*. This class also contains several divisions.

1st. Here I would place the young, who are of an age to earn enough for their own support, and who have physical ability to make this provision for themselves, but who have learned to prefer idleness, and vagrancy, and dissipation, and dishonesty, to regular and useful employment. These juvenile delinquents are not always the children of poor parents; and, where they are not, it may be thought that we should not class them with the poor. But even those of them whose parents are not poor, are in truth living, and, unchecked, will continue to live, upon the industry and resources of others; or, even if some of them should ultimately inherit property, they will, if left to themselves, go on in their career of vice, till they either sink into the abjectness of irremediable poverty, or into the deeper debasement of a life of recklessness and crime. But every juvenile delinquent, if already a pauper, may be rescued from pauperism; and if only on the verge of the gulf, may be saved from falling into it, and made a useful, respectable, and happy member of the community. It is believed that the Farm School, in the establishment of which there will be no further unnecessary delay, will offer facilities and advantages to the parents and friends of disobedient children, which could hardly be given by any merely municipal institution.

2d. Here, likewise, I would place the adult idler, who is *able*, but *unwilling to work*. His ability is the resource God has given him; and if he fail to avail himself of this resource, when he may have employment, society has a right to claim, and to have, from this very resource, a remuneration for all which it may contribute for the sup-

port of the able bodied idler. Through this ability, his poverty is remediable.

Again. There are those who are beginning to be poor through intemperance, with whom, however, intemperance has not yet become an inveterate habit. Their poverty is remediable, because, by wise measures, kindly and perseveringly pursued, they may be recovered from intemperance. Before they were intemperate, they were not indisposed to labor; and, even now, they labor perhaps when they can. But their loss of character brings with it some loss of opportunities of employment; and they are sometimes unfitted for employment, when, if they had been temperate, they might have obtained it. They become as distrustful of themselves, as others are of them. Difficulties and embarrassments come upon them, which they have not energy to bear. They contract debts, which they have no means of paying. And *trouble, trouble,* as they say, drives them to recklessness, and to habitual intoxication. But no one is at once, or suddenly, an habitual drunkard; and he who is an habitual, and irreclaimable drunkard, and therefore irremediably poor, had he early been an object of christian sympathy, and interest, by well directed efforts might have been recovered to temperance, and saved from pauperism, and perhaps from crime and wretchedness.

Again. I would form a division in this class of the thriftless, and the improvident. There are those of this character, who are neither idle, nor intemperate. But they have no notion of a wise and economical appropriation of what they earn to the true necessities of their condition. They have never been instructed in the principles of a wise economy; and they are poor, only because

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yond their control. We place in the third class the curably insane, whose insanity is fairly ascribable to their own misconduct. As far as poverty, or a dependence on charity is occasioned by insanity, it is, of course, as remediable as is the disease; and the innocence of any in these cases being admitted, their claims, at least in the view of Christianity, are as unquestionable, as their condition is forlorn. The proportion is indeed so considerable of cases, in which, under modern treatment, the insane are recovered to the enjoyment of reason, that the division of poor to which I here refer has, on this ground, very strong demands upon the sympathy and interest of their fellow beings.* It would seem, indeed, to whatever cause insanity is in any case to be ascribed, that an appeal for kindness in behalf of those who are bereft of reason, and who can be suitably provided for neither by their own, nor by the

munity, this institution should not have obtained an endowment more suited to its unequivocal, and its great deserts. I am indeed glad of an opportunity, if my judgment shall be thought to be of any value on the question of the usefulness, and the claims of our charitable institutions, to call the attention of our opulent and philanthropic citizens to this important, and deserving Infirmary. It has done much, and might do much more, as a means of saving from poverty, as well as for the alleviation of physical suffering. It is, in every view of it, eminently a christian institution. But with its present resources, it can but partially accomplish its objects. It was founded by the philanthropy, and from the smallness of its funds could have failed but for the untiring services, of Dr Reynolds, and Dr Jeffries. For this Infirmary, as well as for an asylum for the bind, it would seem that nothing more could be wanted, than an appeal to christian sympathy and kindness. But they are both worthy of patronage, if viewed only as expedients of political economy.

* I am told by Dr Wyman, physician of the asylum in Charlestown, that three fourths of the insane, under a wise and faithful treatment, may be considered as curable.

resources of those immediately connected with them, must be wholly needless. And, happily, a truly generous provision is making by the civil authorities of our Commonwealth, exclusively for the insane poor. It is, in truth, a most humiliating fact, that many of the insane poor have been sent to the prisons in our State, and have thus been treated as criminals,—on no other grounds than that this was the least expensive method of confining them. Within six years, fiftyeight of this class of sufferers were sent to the House of Correction in our city; and there shut up in cells sufficiently dark, close, unventilated and unwholesome, to make incurable the insanity from which the unhappy subjects of it might have been recovered, perhaps, even by a month or two of the care and kindness which they could have received, if they had been placed in the asylum in Charlestown.*

There is another section of this class of the poor, which has peculiar claims upon the interest of the patriot, the philanthropist, and the Christian. I refer to that large body, the children of the poor, from infancy to 15, or 16 years of age. Here is at once the most abundant, and the most controllable of the sources of poverty and crime; for here may remedies of these evils be most effectually applied, and thus a new principle of life and happiness be imparted to society. Some of these children require, indeed, no especial care beyond that of their natural guardians; for there are no parents more judicious, vigilant

* Let any one go even now to our House of Correction in Leverett Street, and see the insane who are there, and if he be not shocked by the wickedness of this treatment of these unhappy fellow beings,—why, I know not of any form of immorality which is sufficiently hideous to shock him.

and faithful, than are to be found among the poor. But some among them are *orphans*, who have no immediate relatives that are at once disposed, and able, to take the charge of them. Others of them are *the children of widows*, who would, but unaided cannot, bring them under the discipline of virtuous principles. And others of them are the *intellectually and morally neglected children of poor and vicious parents*. Depraved, however, as any of these children may be, they are still, in respect to their poverty, to be accounted *innocent;* for their poverty, or dependence on charity, to a great extent at least, is a necessary consequence of their parentage. And this poverty should in every case be held to be *remediable*. Children of this class are received into our House of Industry only when they are very young, where they are well taught, and are all indented to masters in the country before they reach the age of twelve years. These children, I am told by the master of the House, generally do well. A considerable number of those who are further advanced in years, and in vice, are sent to the House of Reformation, where, after having been well taught, and well trained in the way they should go, they are also indented to masters in the country, till they shall have attained the age of 21 years. The results of this experiment have been favorable beyond even the most sanguine expectations of its friends. But further provision for this class of children is demanded, and it will soon be made, in the establishment of a Farm School, to which we look as one of the wisest and most efficient of the institutions which has been devised by christian benevolence.* Poverty, and crime indeed

* The proposition of a Farm School, for the more extensive rescue and education of idle and morally exposed children in this city, was

threaten us, and come to us, not solely from the ranks of the poor. Many children of the competent, and even of the rich, through early vice and recklessness may become inmates of our prisons, or beggars in our streets. It is well, therefore, and our duty, to look with a strong solicitude to all the exposures of all the classes of the young. But where the young have natural guardians and protectors, who are able to restrain, to guide and to secure them, on them rests the great responsibility of their guidance and security. But where rests responsibility for the orphan poor; for the children of poor widows who cannot govern them; and for those of vicious parents, who

first made by Patrick T. Jackson. The first plan of the school was drawn by his brother, Judge Jackson, who is President of its Board of Directors, and whose zeal and interest in the cause have been among the most important means of its success. The first meeting at which gentlemen were called together to consider the importance of the object was held in the hall of the Tremont Bank, on the 27th of the last January. Subscription papers for funds were prepared, and in a very short time $23,000 were obtained. A strong wish having been expressed, that the House of Reformation might be connected with the proposed Farm School, several conferences were held with a committee of the city government on the subject: and it was not till about the middle of the last month that it was decided, that this union, for the present, at least, is not expedient. As soon as this decision was made known, the Directors of the Farm School proceeded to make a purchase of Thompson's Island, in Dorchester Bay. A row boat passes with ease, in fifteen minutes, from Dorchester Point, to the island; upon which, as soon as may be, the necessary building will be erected. The island contains one hundred and forty acres of land, almost all of which is of an excellent quality. The right of a landing place at Squantum-Point is also secured, from which the distance to the island is but a sail of two or three minutes. Mr Wells, now superintendent of the House of Reformation, has been elected superintendent of the Farm School, and has accepted the appointment.

care not for their virtue, for their condition here, or for their souls hereafter? To me, indeed, it seems that the divine command, "go and save these children," is as plainly addressed to Christians, as is any one lesson that was ever given to us in the providence of God. And, by fidelity to this duty, more, I believe, may be done to lessen the burden of taxation, to give security to property, to advance the general interests of society, and, above all, to accomplish the moral objects of Christianity in the temporal and spiritual salvation of men, than by any other means within the scope of human exertions.

To this class belong also those, who, being generally able, while they have health, to provide for their daily wants, but unable to meet any extraordinary expenses, are occasionally and temporarily reduced to a dependence on charity by sickness;— it may be their own, or of their children. The loss also of a husband and father, who has provided comfortably for his family, but who had made, and could make, no provision for them beyond the time of his death, may bring a virtuous family to temporary poverty. And, beside these, there are those who must have constant employment to enable them to pay their rent, and to obtain the necessaries of life. Such for example are those, and they are not few, who make coarse shirts and pantaloons for eight or ten cents each, and who, by severe labor, cannot earn more than sixteen or twenty cents a day. But their supply of work occasionally fails; and sometimes for four, and five, and six weeks, they can hardly find enough to earn half, or a third of that sum. This failure of supply must therefore bring them for a time to a dependence on charity. "He who lives upon the wages of daily labor, and can only live

upon those wages, without laying up store for tomorrow, is spending his capital; and a time must come when it will fail." This is not unfrequently a condition of many very deserving families; and of families, too, whose rent must be paid to the last cent, and whose children must be fed. If this temporary dependence cannot be met, and their poverty remedied, by a supply of work, it must be met by charity. Is charity here withheld? The alternative is, extreme suffering from want; or, the scarcely smaller suffering from the embarrassment of debt, which will not only sink them deeper into dependence, but expose them even to sorer, and far more dreadful evils. Some experience is indeed required for a discrimination of character and condition in the cases of those, who plead a want of employment as the cause of their poverty; for there are those who would have employment, but for their inefficiency, or indolence; and who are willing, as far as they can, to live upon the charity and the industry of others. But deception upon this subject cannot long be practised upon those, whose business it is to visit, and to know the poor, and who know how to avail themselves of the lessons of their own experience. And no one who knows how to make this distinction, will think lightly of the wants of the industrious and virtuous poor, who would, but from causes beyond their control cannot, provide for their absolute necessities. No one can understand their condition without strong feelings, not only of sympathy, but of obligation, if he possesses the means, of ministering to their relief and comfort.

The *third* class of the poor to which I would call your attention, consists of those whose poverty, though imme-

diately *attributable to vice*, is yet *remediable*. This class also contains several divisions.

1st. Here I would place the young, who are of an age to earn enough for their own support, and who have physical ability to make this provision for themselves, but who have learned to prefer idleness, and vagrancy, and dissipation, and dishonesty, to regular and useful employment. These juvenile delinquents are not always the children of poor parents; and, where they are not, it may be thought that we should not class them with the poor. But even those of them whose parents are not poor, are in truth living, and, unchecked, will continue to live, upon the industry and resources of others; or, even if some of them should ultimately inherit property, they will, if left to themselves, go on in their career of vice, till they either sink into the abjectness of irremediable poverty, or into the deeper debasement of a life of recklessness and crime. But every juvenile delinquent, if already a pauper, may be rescued from pauperism; and if only on the verge of the gulf, may be saved from falling into it, and made a useful, respectable, and happy member of the community. It is believed that the Farm School, in the establishment of which there will be no further unnecessary delay, will offer facilities and advantages to the parents and friends of disobedient children, which could hardly be given by any merely municipal institution.

2d. Here, likewise, I would place the adult idler, who is *able*, but *unwilling to work*. His ability is the resource God has given him; and if he fail to avail himself of this resource, when he may have employment, society has a right to claim, and to have, from this very resource, a remuneration for all which it may contribute for the sup-

port of the able bodied idler. Through this ability, his poverty is remediable.

Again. There are those who are beginning to be poor through intemperance, with whom, however, intemperance has not yet become an inveterate habit. Their poverty is remediable, because, by wise measures, kindly and perseveringly pursued, they may be recovered from intemperance. Before they were intemperate, they were not indisposed to labor; and, even now, they labor perhaps when they can. But their loss of character brings with it some loss of opportunities of employment; and they are sometimes unfitted for employment, when, if they had been temperate, they might have obtained it. They become as distrustful of themselves, as others are of them. Difficulties and embarrassments come upon them, which they have not energy to bear. They contract debts, which they have no means of paying. And *trouble, trouble,* as they say, drives them to recklessness, and to habitual intoxication. But no one is at once, or suddenly, an habitual drunkard; and he who is an habitual, and irreclaimable drunkard, and therefore irremediably poor, had he early been an object of christian sympathy, and interest, by well directed efforts might have been recovered to temperance, and saved from pauperism, and perhaps from crime and wretchedness.

Again. I would form a division in this class of the thriftless, and the improvident. There are those of this character, who are neither idle, nor intemperate. But they have no notion of a wise and economical appropriation of what they earn to the true necessities of their condition. They have never been instructed in the principles of a wise economy; and they are poor, only because

they are thriftless, and in their way, extravagant. One may expend all for food; and another, all for dress, or for some other equally foolish indulgence. Masters and mistresses of families may do much for the prevention of poverty from these sources, and make themselves great benefactors to their domestics, by faithfully instructing those who live with them in this relation, in the rules and habits of personal and domestic economy; by encouraging them, instead of squandering their wages, to deposit them for accumulation and interest in the Savings Bank;* and, by calling forth, and strengthening in them, a sense of duty in regard to the future, — their future support and comfort in life, — train them to the sen-

*The Savings Bank in this city was incorporated in December, 1816. Since that time, the depositors in it have been 21,260; and the amount of deposits $3,347,533. A number of gentlemen, in succession, have gratuitously given much time to the direction of its concerns. But it was begun, and has principally been sustained, by the energy and untiring benevolence of James Savage, — a name which needs no titles. I know, indeed, that nothing which I can say will add anything to the estimation in which this gentleman is held among us, as a benefactor of our city. But my opportunities have been greater than those of most of our fellow citizens to know the extent of his labors, and the worth of his services in this cause; and I know that his good fame has been well earned, and that it will wear well. When the causes of pauperism and crime, and the principles and means of their prevention, shall have obtained a wider interest, and shall be better understood among us, the value of the institution for which we are so much indebted to Mr Savage will be even more generally, and strongly felt, than it now is. Nor do I hesitate to say, that he will deserve to be held in grateful remembrance by succeeding generations in our city, till the pile of granite which has been reared for our New Savings Bank shall have crumbled into dust.

timents and habits, which will do much to secure for them a competency, under any but extraordinary exigencies of their life. Nor will the ministry for the poor be unfitly employed in teaching this economy from house to house. Nor will any one, be he who he may, have conferred a small benefit either on the individual, or on society, who has impressed wise, prudential maxims on any mind, which might not otherwise have learned them; and by the influence he has thus exerted, has saved a fellow being from the sufferings, and the exposures, of a life of thriftlessness and poverty.

The *fourth* of the classes into which I would divide the poor consists of those, whose poverty is *irremediable*, and is to be *ascribed to their own misconduct.*

In the first division of this class I would place *the irrecoverably intemperate.*

I have indeed stated, as a leading principle of my ministry, that human nature, or in other words a fellow being, whatever may have been his transgressions, and whatever may be his character, is never to be given up as irretrievably lost. The number, however, is not inconsiderable of those, in whom the springs of their moral being seem to be so far enfeebled, or even worn out, by long continued vicious indulgence, — for example, by the habitual and almost unrestrained intemperance of many years, — that they are no longer to be trusted within the circle of the exposures, under the power of which they have most clearly proved themselves unable to maintain a resolution of abstinence and virtue. They are not to be morally given up, as utterly beyond hope, because there are yet in them moral elements, of which, under a change of circumstances in regard to them, we may

avail ourselves to do much for their moral restoration. But they must be brought under other external influences than those under which they have lived, in order to their due preparation for the excitement, and exercise of the moral power, which still remains to them. They are not in a condition to be trusted with freedom, and therefore should not have it. At least, they should be restrained, till it is believed by those who are competent to a judgment upon the subject, that a trial of liberty may be allowed to them. I believe without a doubt, that if an asylum should be instituted for the intemperate, by a confinement in which they should be made to feel, that, vicious as they have been, and are, still they are not confounded in public estimation with profligates and thieves; in which every inmate, as far as may be practicable, should work at the trade in which he has been educated, and in which his earnings would be greatest; in which his confinement should be long enough to give a reasonable hope that a change of moral habits, as well as of dispositions, has been acquired; and in which the earnings of every inmate, above the sum necessary for his own support in the institution, should be appropriated, if need be, for the support and comfort of his family; I have, I repeat, no doubt that such an asylum would be a means of a complete moral recovery of very many, who would otherwise be irrecoverably intemperate, poor, and miserable. I feel as much abhorrence of intemperance as is felt by any one. But I have lived in a connexion so long, and intimate, with this class of our fellow beings, that I well know, that desperate, self-abandoned, and even utterly irrecoverable as some may be, many of them have claims upon universal sympathy, and commiseration, as strong even as those of any class

of human sufferers. I have seen them weeping bitterly under convictions of the guilt and misery to which their intemperance has brought them; and I believe that, for the time, they were sincerely resolved to avail themselves of the means of maintaining a life of future sobriety. I believe their sincerity of purpose, because I have known it to be followed out by a total abstinence from intoxicating spirits for a month, or for six weeks, or even for three months. But the deeply seated disease, moral as well as physical, which has been induced by years of intemperate indulgence, and which has seemed to have been, — and may it not actually have been? — controlled in its power for a time by the strong moral exercises of their minds, has again renewed its attacks; and, when these moral sensibilities have been less strong, and these moral exercises less active than they were, or, it may be, have been suspended, the demon has returned, as it would sometimes seem, with a seven-fold power; and each last state of the poor victim is, perhaps, worse than that which preceded it. While, therefore, I would never cease from endeavors to reclaim every intemperate individual, to whom it may be my privilege to extend the offices of the christian ministry, I am yet compelled to form from the habitually inebriate, a division of the irremediably poor. For, even though many, and most of them, by the means I have suggested should be wholly recovered to temperance, yet if the physical system be so far diseased, and broken down, by their previous habits, that they are not again to be capable of labor, they must, if they have depended on their daily labors for their daily bread, be irremediably poor; or in other words, dependent on chari-

ty during the remainder of their lives. In our new House of Correction, now in progress, in which classifications may be made of its inmates; in which the principle of solitary confinement at night will be adopted, and I hope also, lengthened terms of confinement, and a wise provision for religious and moral instruction, during which a fair trial at least may be made of the practicability of establishing new habits, something may be done to meet the want of an asylum for the intemperate; and no inconsiderable influence exerted for the reformation of this, and of other classes of its inmates. Our old House of Correction, to the reproach of our city, has been too long tolerated among us. I have had ample opportunity to know its character, and influences; and I have no doubt whether it has greatly ministered to the increase of intemperance, and of profligacy among us. Should the intemperate, in our new institution, be wholly separated, as they ought to be, from other classes of offenders within it, and be brought under the moral discipline under which they may be brought there, I believe that the irremediably poor of their number will be small, compared with what it now is. And, should society avail itself of its rightful power, in regard to the existing causes of this evil, a very large proportion of the pauperism by which our fellow beings are debased would be prevented, and an incalculable amount added to human virtue and happiness.

2dly. Here, too, I would place the *inveterately profligate* who fall into poverty.

There is indeed much less ground for a hope of the recovery of those who are far gone in profligacy, than of

those in any other class either of civil, or moral offenders. Of profligacy, says Burns,

> "I waive the quantum of the sin,
> The hazard of concealing;
> But, och! it *hardens a' within,*
> *And petrifies the feeling.*"

And, truly, it does *petrify* all the best sensibilities of our common nature. It debases man more than any other sin. But it debases woman far more than man. And as the number is large of those, who, by reason of their profligacy, are unable to obtain the means of their support by any honest and honorable employment; and, failing of support by this cause, who have no alternative but to beg, or to steal, or to live on in their sin; the moral well being of the community is deeply concerned in the inquiry, how shall they live? or, what disposition shall be made of them? Many of them, if rescued in an early stage of their transgression, and committed for a few years to the kindly care of faithful and competent teachers, might be saved from falling into poverty, or dependence. But when they cannot be made to earn their subsistence; — and this is the case of but too many of them, — they are, and must be treated as irremediably poor.

Here, in fine, I would place all those, whose poverty is a consequence of their vices, and whose vices have reduced them to a permanent inability for self-support. There is a poverty, which is immediately attributable to insanity; and, going one step farther back, to vice, the cause of the insanity. There are also sore bodily diseases, which induce a permanent incapacity for labor, in those

who have depended for their support upon their daily earnings, which are most clearly to be attributed to their violations of the laws of God, and of man. It is very questionable, how far any of the individuals of this division should be left at liberty, to live where, and as they will. They are, however, as far as they retain moral faculties, still to be treated as moral beings, and therefore to be brought under the most favorable moral influences. This is not less the dictate of Christian humanity, than it is that they should still be recognised as beings partaking of the physical wants which are inseparable from our common nature. I would not, indeed, that they should be considered as convicts, and their place of confinement as a prison. But I would that we should neither discourage the exertions of the virtuous for self-support, by an exercise of charity which shall give it the operation of a bounty upon vice; nor encourage the vicious in their debasement, by showing them that they may safely continue in it, and still look with confidence for equal favor at last, as if they had resolutely maintained their virtue.

In view of this classification of the poor, I think it will be obvious, 1st, that all, in each of the divisions of the first class, — that is, that the incurably insane, the idiot, and the deficient in capacity for self-direction and self-support, — have as strong and defensible a *claim* for their support upon those who have the means of aiding and supporting them, as he who has inherited, or has earned property, has by law, and common consent, a claim upon such property. The single fact, that they are poor without any fault of their own, con-

sidered in connexion with the acknowledged principle of law, that "the act of God injures no man," establishes their rightful claim to support by others; their absolute right and claim, 1st, upon their near relatives; and 2dly, upon the community, where there are no relatives who may support them. I attach importance to this doctrine, because, if admitted, — and in this view of it I think that it hardly admits of dispute, — it settles a great and primary question respecting large numbers of the poor. It places the duty of making a comfortable provision for the irremediably, and innocently poor, upon its true foundation; that of unequivocal *right*, and *justice*. I know not, indeed, of a more palpable violation of justice, and of absolute right, in any of the transactions which human laws have declared to be criminal, than is the act of confounding any of these innocent sufferers with criminals, by imprisoning them with criminals. This, however, has been done, and is still done, both in this city, and in other parts of our Commonwealth. Would that I could make any exposition of this evil, which would excite all in our State and country to demand, till they had obtained, its perfect remedy!

In view also of the second of these classes of the poor, that is, of the deaf and dumb, the blind, the curably insane, children who cannot be provided for by their parents, or near relatives, and all, in fine, who, without any fault on their own part, are necessarily and temporarily poor, I would ask, if their *right* likewise to the care and support of others, in proportion to, and during the time of their inability, be not as perfect as is the right of those of the first class? They are *innocent*, as far as respects

their poverty. This is an elementary consideration which is not to be lost sgiht of. If, then, they have no relatives who are able to take the charge of them, or if adequate provision be not made for them by private charity, is not the State, or the Government of the State, bound to stand to them in the relation of a parent, to assume this charge, and to be faithful to the duties implied in it? Here, indeed, is not only implied a limitation of the time during which the individuals of this class may *claim* the protection and support of society ; but, a *right* also on the part of society, which is quite as absolute as this claim, to avail itself of any capacities which any of these individuals may have for self-support, under the direction of others. Nay, society will have a perfect right, if they shall ever be able to render it, to demand of these individuals a compensation for what it may have done for them. But it cannot rightfully, or innocently, disregard their claims. These claims are as clearly to be inferred from the elementary principles of common law, as they are from those of humanity, and of religion.

In respect to those of the third and fourth classes, the ground of appeal to charity is changed. There are, indeed, rights and claims, which can never be lost. The greatest offender against the laws either of God, or man, may justly claim from his fellow man exemption from suffering, or loss, any further than suffering or loss on his part is essential for the security of the rights of others. If it can be shown of any one, that the forfeit of his life is essential for the security of the lives of others, his life is then justly forfeited, and may be taken. But in no other case may it justly be taken by man. If any one may be so confined, whatever may have been his crime, that no

danger is to be apprehended from him,he has, as far as man is concerned, a perfect right to his life. This, I think, should be an admitted principle of criminal jurisprudence. There are therefore rights and claims of the vicious, as well as of the virtuous poor. But here, also, are as definable rights and claims of society. If the support of any, by society, is demanded, or becomes necessary, while the individuals claiming it have ability, under the superintendence of others, by any labors to contribute to their own support, the right of society is perfect to claim, and to enforce this labor. Government therefore has the right, and it is its duty, to establish Work-Houses, Houses of Correction, and State Prisons; and to require the labors of the inmates of these institutions for their own support. Let the idle, then, the drunkard, the dishonest, the profligate, and other classes of offenders against the laws, be recognised as enemies of society. Let society provide for its own security by their confinement; and let it demand, as it rightly may, the products that may be obtained from their industry, as a remuneration for the charge of them. But, while it punishes them, let *their correction*, and not *its revenge*, be the object of this confinement, and of this punishment; let a just discrimination be made between the classes of offenders; and, let the claims of mere misfortune, and of innocent inability, be acknowledged with a free and generous sympathy. A recognition of these principles, I believe, would do much to lessen the amount of want, and crime, and misery, and to advance the security and happiness of society.

I beg leave, in addition, yet a moment longer, to call your attention to two of the divisions which are here made of the poor. I refer, 1st, to the morally exposed

children, who, if left to go on in vagrancy and vice, it is almost certain will fall into pauperism and crime, or both; and, 2dly, to the intemperate; and in connexion with these, to the facilities and excitements to intemperance, which are so far at least authorized, as to be licensed by our laws.

I have placed the children to whom I here refer in the second and third classes of the poor. And I have spoken of their *claims* upon public and private interest for provision for their support. They have, however, quite as strong a claim to special care for their moral security. I am solicitous for no object more than for this regard, and provision for this class of the young; for, I repeat, there are no means by which so much may be done, as by these, for the prevention of pauperism and crime, and all their attendant personal and social evils. A large provision is indeed made by our city, and throughout New England, for the support of free schools. This is well. The laws which require, and provide for the support of these schools, are a recognition, on the part of the legislature, of the just claims of children, and of the duty of government in regard to them. But is the law which establishes these schools commensurate with the claims of those for whom they are instituted? It is, indeed, as far as these schools are commensurate with those actual necessities of children, without a provision for which there is neither security for themselves, nor for the society in which they may live. In other words, they fairly satisfy the claims of those children, who need not any further care for their education, except on the part of their natural guardians. But there are children in our own community, and in many other communities, who are at an

age at which they should be in some school, but are not in any; who are idlers and vagrants; who are living without moral restraint; and are every day advancing as rapidly in the vicious education which they are receiving not only in the streets, and in their haunts, but in their very homes, as the most industrious children in our schools, and the best morally taught at home, are advancing in useful knowledge, and in virtue. And, it should be understood, there are children also in our schools, who, by the vicious associations in which they are living, either from the indisposition, or the inability of their parents to restrain them, are in a daily and regular training for a vicious, a mischievous, and a miserable life. Where, then, lies the responsibility for these children? I pray for a calm and serious attention to this inquiry. Is it answered, first, without doubt, with their parents, or their other near relations? True. But suppose that they have not parents, or near relatives; or, if they have, that these parents or relatives are unequal to the charge, or are faithless to it. Is there then no further responsibility for them? Does society *owe*, — I mean literally, does society— owe them no further care, and no other provision for their moral safety and well being? Or, if this inquiry be deemed exceptionable, I will ask, has society no direct claim upon them for its own security, and no corresponding duties towards them, which it may not wisely disregard? This question, I am happy to say, has been answered by our city government, in the ordinance which has established the House of Reformation at South Boston. And it has received as distinct a reply from our community, in the measures which are in train for the institution of a Farm School, the great design of which

is, a provision for the moral education, as extensive and complete as it may be, of all the children in our city, whose moral exposures are believed to require peculiar care, at once for their own virtue and happiness, and for the well being of the community. Our city has no greater benefactors than the men, who, by these, and other means, are doing what may be done to close the very springs of pauperism and crime among us. The Savings Bank, the House of Reformation, and the Farm School, are among the noblest of human devices for human good. They are preëminently christian institutions, because they are exclusively the growth of christian sentiments of humanity and duty; because they meet a class of the claims of humanity, which Christianity distinctly recognises. Let their character and influence, then, be justly estimated, and they will never want either friends or patrons. Let them be duly supported, and cherished, and, with the increase of our population, we shall have to diminish, rather than increase our provisions for abject poverty and crime. Happy will be the society, in which great moral preventives shall supersede the necessity of legal coercion, for the security and happiness of its members! The experiment of the tendencies of force and of fear, as the great instruments for the government and security of society, has been continued quite long enough to satisfy every fair mind. Our country, at least, is in a favorable condition for a fair trial of the efficacy of an appeal to, and a reliance upon, the higher principles of human nature. And if proper measures shall be taken to call forth these principles, and to secure their predominance, I have no fear for the result. To the extent to which the trial has been carried, we have the most satisfactory evi-

dence of its happy results; and our community can be blessed by nothing more, which God has placed within the power of man, than by the widest possible extension of this good among us.

We may, however, do all that can be done for the moral education of the young, and yet, to a very painful extent, be expending our strength for nought, as long as our streets are everywhere holding out facilities and excitements to intemperance, under the very sanction of the law. Intemperance, under these circumstances, will increase, and with it the number of poor, and of criminals. Where, then, I would here also ask, lies the responsibility for these evils?

The Legislature assumes the right to regulate the sale of ardent spirits. This assumption is founded in the right, which is conceded to government, of controlling those operations of individuals, an unrestricted allowance of which is incompatible with the general welfare; as the power to require the erection and maintenance of Work-Houses, Houses of Correction, County Jails and State Prisons, is founded, in like manner, upon the right which is also conceded to government, of depriving of their liberty, and otherwise of punishing those, whom its other restrictive enactments are insufficient to deter from idleness, vagrancy and crime. And yet, by the very terms on which it offers to license the keeping of dram-shops, and the freest sale of the substances which it recognises, in their abuse, to be a cause, and of which we have the evidence everywhere around us, that they are among the most active and influential of the causes, of abject pauperism and crime, it does all which it can well do to legalize that, which it acknowledges to be inconsistent with *the public safety*; and, thus to secure a per

ual increase of the inmates of those very institutions, a principal demand for which grows out of the facilities and excitements which dram-shops and bar-rooms offer to intemperance, lawlessness, and every civil and moral offence. Now I would say, that government either has the right and the power to restrict the sale of these spirits, or it has not. If it have not the right, let the assumption of it be relinquished ; and let every one, in this respect, do what he will, without asking permission, and purchasing the privilege to do it. But if it have the right and power, I would ask, what is the extent of that right and power ? Is it limited to acts which do not, and which it is known cannot, and will not, impose the smallest possible restraint upon the sale of these spirits ? Why, then, waste time and money in laboriously framing and modifying legislative enactments, which not only go for nothing in the cause either of private virtue, or of public security, but which themselves virtually sanction debasement and crime, and, indirectly call up any sentiment in the public mind respecting other legal restraints, than that of respect, and a sense of the importance of regarding them ? I would appeal to Legislators, and to our whole community, on this great subject. If government have the power to restrict the sale of these spirits, except on the conditions on which it shall see fit to license their sale, it must then have the power to impose conditions, which shall be effectual to the restraint of their sale. This seems to be self-evident. And if they have the power to impose these conditions, where lies the responsibility for the six or seven hundred dram-shops in our city ; and for the facility, in every village in our Commonwealth, of obtaining a gallon of these spirits for the small cost of forty

cents? Either power is here assumed without right, or there is a very sorry trifling, in our legislation upon this subject, with right, and power, and responsibility. Much has indeed been done in the cause of temperance, and much more I trust is to be effected, through an enlightened public opinion. But our halls of legislation have yet done nothing in this good work. Have they, however, nothing to do in it? And, have they not all the requisite power to do much in it; and thus more, perhaps, than by any other single restrictive right and power which they possess, to secure order, and happiness, property, liberty and life? *

* We have recently seen not only our city government, but our public at large, awake to the duty of doing all that could be done for security against the disease, of the ravages of which we have heard so much in the other cities and nations of the world. And when it was found impracticable to prevent its irruption, the most prompt and energetic measures were taken to arrest its progress, by removing the causes by which it was supposed that it might have been generated. But is the *intemperance* which prevails in our city, in our commonwealth and our country, a smaller, or is it an incomparably greater evil, than the cholera? And if equal solicitude were felt by the government of our city, and state, and nation, and a proportionally united and resolute effort were made by the temperate in our land, for the absolute suppression of intemperance, as has been made in Boston for protection from the cholera, how long would intemperance continue to be as it is among us? May God open our eyes to the true character of evils, and unite our hearts in the cause of correcting, and of preventing them!

"In solemn truth, there is nothing of more serious consideration, nor which more loudly calls for a remedy, than the evil now complained against," — drunkenness. "For what can be more worthy the care of the Legislature, than to preserve the morals, the innocence, the health, strength and lives of a great part, — I will repeat, the most useful part, — of the people? So far am I, in my opinion, from representing this in too serious, or too strong a light,

In my last Report I expressed "my strong desire, that some one should take my place in this ministry, to whom I might act as an assistant, and on whom might devolve the whole duties of the chapel." That desire has been accomplished. My young friend, Mr Charles F. Barnard, has entered upon the service in the fulness of its spirit; and I look with great confidence and happiness to the results of his labors. You will join with me in the fervent prayer, that he may be an instrument of extending widely among us a christian sense of human relations; of doing much to ameliorate condition through the improvement of character; and thus, of advancing the cause and kingdom of Christ. Of the patrons of this ministry, I entreat for him a full portion of the sympathy and aid, which have been so generously accorded to myself.

A very few words more, and I have done.

"Men have outgrown the other institutions of that period when Christianity appeared; its philosophy, its modes of warfare, its policy, its public and private economy. But

that I can find no words, or metaphor, adequate to my ideas on this subject. The first invention of this diabolical liquor may be compared to the poisoner of a fountain, whence a large city was to derive its waters; the highest crime, it has been thought, of which human nature is capable; a degree of villany, indeed, of which I cannot recollect any example. But, surely, if such was ever practised, the governors of that city would not be thought blameless, did they not endeavor, to the utmost, to withhold the citizens from drinking the poisonous draught. And, if such a general thirst after it prevailed, as we are told possessed the people of Athens at the time of the plague, when, as Thucydides says, they *ran into the wells*, being constantly possessed by an inexhausted thirst, what could justify the not effectually *cutting off all the aqueducts, by which the poison was dispersed among the people?*"—"*Causes of the Increase of Robbers.*" *Fielding's Works.* Vol. x. pp. 385, 6.

Christianity has never shrunk as intellect has opened, but has kept in advance of men's faculties, and has unfolded nobler views, in proportion as they have ascended." * Let these nobler views, then, engage the thought and interest of those who may, if they will, do much to bring the institutions of our city far nearer than they have yet been brought to the purity of character, and to the happiness in their results, which Christian principles only will impart and secure to them. There is too much of a disposition among us to overlook the great interests which are comprehended in our schools, our penitentaries, and our public charities. But is it not, comparatively, a matter of very light concern, whether a few thousand dollars more or less shall annually be appropriated for the clearing of sewers, or the widening of streets; or, whether a few dozens or scores, more or less, shall annually be added to, or taken from, the number of our paupers and criminals? Whence, then, is it, that there is among us so many, from whom an exalted public spirit might have been expected, so much disregard of our institutions for education, and for penal and charitable purposes? These institutions are now young; and we may prune them, and engraft upon them, with a confidence that they will reward us with the genuine fruits of justice, and of benevolence. But let them become entangled in their growth, and acquire obduracy and stubbornness from time, and the evils connected with them may be irremediable. I beseech, then, the intelligent and moral among us, to look carefully to the character, the condition and prospects of those institutions, which they are taxed to support, and which will bring increasing weal,

* Channing's Discourses, Reviews and Miscellanies. p. 35

or wo, upon themselves, and their descendants. To whom shall the charge of these institutions be committed? This is an inquiry of solemn import to the well being of our community; and every elector answers this inquiry for himself, by the vote which he casts into the ballot box. And, does not he incur a fearful responsibility, who, professing to comprehend the value of these institutions, does not give his vote in our public elections; and thus withholds his suffrage from those, to whom a little reflection would make him even solicitous that these great interests should be entrusted?

I have had no interruption in my ministry for the last six months from ill health; and I look back to this term with equal gratitude and happiness, as to any equal portion of the time which I have passed in this service. I trust that this ministry may now be considered as established among us. May it go on increasing in its beneficial results, and commending itself alike to the rich and the poor. It must, and it will, if it shall be wisely conducted, be one of the most important of the instruments which can be employed, in cities at least, to extend most wisely the purifying and saving influences of Christianity, and to advance social order, security and happiness.

Respectfully,

JOSEPH TUCKERMAN.

*November* 5, 1832.

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THE

# PRACTICAL IMPORTANCE

OF THE

# UNITARIAN CONTROVERSY.

BY REV. W. J. FOX,
OF LONDON.

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THE

# UNITARIAN CONTROVERSY.

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As Christianity originally, so Unitarianism now, has to strive against ignorance, indifference, and scorn, in order to obtain, not a full reception, but a fair hearing. The discussion of its tenets is regarded by the great mass of the public on the one hand, and by men of education, literature, and intelligence, on the other, as merely a sectarian controversy; and therefore it is regarded with listlessness or with contempt. And if their view of it were correct, the feeling which they evince might perhaps be justified without much difficulty. The world owes little gratitude to theological acuteness, directed as it has usually been to the letter that killeth, rather than to the spirit that giveth life; and issuing, as it has usually done, in the fabrication of creeds, the alienation of hearts, and the rearing of some petty diversity of faith or forms, as the banner of a party, rather than in the practical advancement of those principles of devotion and benevolence by which God is honored, and mankind purified, exalted, and blessed. But I shall endeavour to show that this view of the Unitarian controversy is not correct; that it does not lay waste the intellect by metaphysical and critical trifling, nor desolate the heart by bigotry and bitterness; but that those who treat it as an affair of mere speculation, and those who

regard it as one of the common-place squabbles of sectarianism, and those who allow its importance only to misrepresent its character, and describe its results as injurious and dangerous, are alike mistaken.

It should be distinctly understood that they are not merely speculative points, by agreement in which our union is cemented, or to the dissemination of which our zeal is directed. Prove them to be such, and I should say, let us instantly disband ourselves, and consult our own peace and that of the world, by dismissing all such questions to their proper sphere, the libraries of the learned, and the studies of the idle and the curious. The justification of our union and our exertions is to be found, and can only be found, in the importance of our principles. The controversy we promote must be a good fight, to vindicate our waging it. I shall therefore aim to show that the Unitarian controversy tends to the liberation of the intellect, the expansion of the affections, and the better regulation of the conduct; that it tends to benefit man in head, heart, and life.

1. The Unitarian controversy is a warfare for the emancipation of the human understanding. We invite men to inquire into religious doctrines freely and fearlessly. They have too long been told that there are tenets which they must not question, unless they would endanger or forfeit the salvation of their souls. They have too long been enslaved by the apprehension of damnation for involuntary error. No one doubts that it is pernicious for investigation to be biassed or repressed by temporal considerations. When men dare not inquire, lest the results, honestly avowed, should involve the loss of gown, stall, or mitre, with the dignities and emoluments append-

ed thereto, the evil is generally recognised. And what is that evil? That men tamper with their consciences; that they sophisticate to themselves; that they hunt eagerly for proofs, and look away from objections; that their minds lose integrity and vigor as to other spheres of intellectual exertion; that they are false to the cause of truth, and through them its progress is impeded, and its triumphs are postponed. And is the case essentially different if the misguiding or repressing motive, the bribe and the threat, be drawn from a future world? The motive operates in the same direction; the difference is that in the latter case its force is far more crushing. Who can investigate calmly with such an interest at stake? The understanding ought not to be put in this position.

Look at the results of this system of spiritual intimidation. Compare theological literature with all other kinds of literature. How poor, and feeble, and petty, and barren, and word-catching, and narrow-minded, and unprogressive, is the appearance it presents! How few and far between are those angel-visits of genius which have irradiated, from time to time, the inferior regions of poetry, and politics, and science! And this in theology! which is in itself the noblest of all the regions of thought and feeling; which is the first of sciences, or rather which includes all sciences, which pervades them as God pervades the universe, and because God pervades the universe; which supplies their ultimate principles, and appropriates their discoveries, and links them together, like stars in a constellation, into a bright and harmonious, and powerful unity: theology, which appeals to the entire soul of man; not merely to the understanding, like science; nor to the imagination, like poetry; nor to the

active powers, like the useful arts; but which demands all faculties of thought, feeling, or exertion, and consecrates, and exalts, and blesses all, making the whole man the temple of God's spirit of wisdom, power, and love: theology, which instead of chilling, and enfeebling, and withering, the mind, should, and would if unperverted, by its unrivalled sublimity, and intense loveliness, and universal influence, "create a soul beneath the ribs of death," and into the dullest clod breathe the breath of inspiration! It is the proper business of theology to form, and cherish, and develope, and stimulate to their greatest achievements, the highest orders of human intellect. Instead of which, modern theology puts fetters on the soul at the very portals of the temple, and thinks God honored by the clanking of these mental chains. The writers who have most graced religion, in an intellectual view, have either been rebellious to the creed imposed on them, (Taylor denied original sin, Barrow opposed particular redemption,) or, like Milton, Locke, and Newton, their minds were trained in another school, and they brought to theology the vigor which had been nursed by physical, mental, or political science.

To impress a foreigner with an exalted, with a correct notion of what the human intellect had been, and had done, in these countries, who would think of selecting our theology? You might take for such a purpose, in a mass, our poets, our philosophers, our statesmen; they would each show that we are "sprung of earth's best blood, have titles manifold," but no one would dare to put forward our theology. This alone is sufficient to show that there is something essentially wrong. That wrong I take to be the prevalence of a theology which *suppresses* thought, by threatening mental error with the

penalty of eternal damnation. I know that this system appeals to the Scriptures. I also know that it is only supported by the perversion of the Scriptures. I could shew that whenever faith and salvation are connected there, either the faith is a moral quality, not an intellectual act; or the salvation is only a prophecy of temporal deliverance, and not the promise of an eternal heaven. But this is beside my present purpose. I am only now urging the fact that revelation speaks to man through his reason; and instead of limiting and quelling that reason by telling him that any of its honest conclusions can be a crime to be eternally punished, requires that every man judge what is said, and be, "fully persuaded in his own mind."

It is in proportion as the intellect is left thus free from the bias of hope or fear, that it flourishes in any department. Our noblest species of literature is our philosophy; the second our poetry; the third politics; the last our theology. In each, truth is the object; truth, in the first, as to the laws of matter and of mind; in the second, truth of description, feeling, and character; in the third, truth as to the tendencies of institutions and measures; in the last, truth concerning God, duty, and futurity. The order of their excellence is precisely that of the degree of mental freedom, freedom from the prospect of reward or punishment as to particular conclusions, which exists in them respectively. There is little or nothing to bias in philosophy. In poetry there are the taste, the passions, and prejudices of the time, so far as these deviate from the common and permanent sympathies of humanity. In politics there are great temporal interests involved. And in religion there are terrors which few minds can resist, incessantly directed against denial, or even doubt, and therefore against investigation. Hence the order of

excellence reverses the order of importance. Hence the timidity, the narrowness, the barrenness of mind which we lament in theology.

We strive to break this benumbing spell: We would expose this terrific fallacy. We would raise the slave of creeds into the freeman of Christ. We demand, with him, "Why do ye not even of yourselves judge that which is right?" We sound the trumpet of the gospel, and cry "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." And would not the world be benefited if men could be made to think as freely and as vigorously in religion as they do in other concerns? Have not all great eras of improvement been characterized by a burst of intellectual activity? Was it not thus when Christianity roused the nations from the torpidity of their ancient skepticism and idolatry? Was it not thus when the Reformation was achieved? A pure, and rational, and liberal theology would exalt the character of any people to the proudest heights of intellectual dignity. This was the soul of the consecrated literature of Judea. Whether prophets and apostles were theologically inspired or not, their theology inspired them intellectually; it was from heaven, and raised their minds above the world; it gave them a sublimity unapproached by all other philosophers, moralists, and bards. Such should ever be the effect of genuine religion. Such never can be its influence till the bigotry and imposition are overthrown which denounce against what they call heresy and error the pains and penalties of eternity.

2. While one class of the questions at issue between us and those who call themselves Orthodox bears upon the emancipation of the intellect, there is another class

which bears not less strongly upon the feelings and affections, and the decision of which in our favor may be fairly termed the emancipation of the heart, its liberation from the spirit of bondage by that perfect love which casteth out fear, the fear which has torment. If I read aright the New Testament, love is the sum and substance of its religion; the essence of the devotion which it inspires, of the morality which it enjoins, and of the heaven which it promises. "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." But men can never be thus in heart and soul united with their God and their fellow-creatures while they believe that supreme excellence includes such an attribute as vindictive justice — a justice which punishes not for purposes of kindness and correction, but merely on the principle of so much suffering for so much sin, that suffering itself producing more sin, and extending to all eternity: that the greatest sum of happiness, the universal good of his creatures, the greatest good of the whole, which necessarily includes the greatest good of the individual, was never contemplated by the Creator in his work of creation, nor will ever be realized by the operations of his providence and grace: that the Father is partial, infinitely partial, and out of the mass of conscious existence which he has produced selects a portion for goodness and happiness, abandoning the rest to remediless and endless anguish: that there are beings in the universe, intellectual, spiritual, mighty, and immortal beings, whose nature, agency, and destiny, is evil, unmixed evil: that man comes into the world corrupt to the heart's core, incapable of all good, and that except in those who undergo a certain change, and receive a certain faith, there neither is, nor has been, nor to eternity shall or can be, anything

whatever which morally is the proper object of complacence and love: that evil is final in the Divine plan, and that there is a region in which depravity and misery shall never cease to reign over millions, a region of blasphemies and vice, and foulness and hopelessness, and anguish unutterable.

Disguise and palliate and equivocate as advocates may for the purposes of controversy, these are the vital, practical doctrines of the faith which millions hold for Christianity. Whatever may be the amiable inconsistencies of individuals, it is impossible, while these tenets are held, for the spirit of Christian love to pervade the land. They may be checked in some degree by doctrines of a different character; they may also be checked by the best impulses of our calumniated nature; but they cannot be neutralized; they are too prominent in the system to which they belong, to be without a mighty influence over the heart; and that influence it is our bounden duty to struggle for the annihilation of. They are a source of slavish fear in religion, which is alike degrading to man who feels it, to the gospel which is represented as working by such base means, and to God who is its object. They are a source of censoriousness and bigotry, which bring upon society a countless train of evils, often perpetrating by word and deed atrocious injustice, and sowing the land with seeds of bitterness. They turn men aside from "doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with their God." They fill the world with contentions; and the deathbed even of their firmest votaries is often a scene of changing emotions, and melancholy apprehensions, and dark despondings, which it is fearful to contemplate.

Much must be done with men's minds before their hearts become right with God, or right with humanity.

Controversy must eradicate the prejudices which impede the growth of their affections. They must be brought into the light, to make them feel the warmth of genuine religion. Many a massy pile of false doctrine must be battered down before theology and morality can be reconstructed on the broad foundations which Christ has laid of universal love. On this principle alone, carried out into all its bearings, do we arrive at the full manifestation of the spirit of the gospel. This is the spirit of Christ, which makes and marks us his; in extending its influence we are advancing his kingdom; and in its final diffusion will the objects of his mission be accomplished.

3. A third class of questions at issue between us and others, relate to various views of repentance, and righteousness, and pardon, and conversion, and heaven; and involve to a large extent the activity which the believer is impelled to put forth, the motives by which he is to be influenced, and the course he should pursue, in this life of probation and preparation.

The greatest power which I can imagine religion to possess, and the most beneficial direction of that power, both for the individual and for the community, are when men conceive the dignity and happiness of an hereafter to consist in the full development of the intellectual, moral, and social principles of human nature, as constituted by its paternal Creator; when their heaven is a state of exalted attainment, of glowing affection, of beneficent activity, and all holding on an interminable progress through the ages of eternity; and when, as is the natural influence of such a notion as this, they advance towards future bliss by realizing here, with

all their ability and energy, that which they hope to become in the kingdom of heaven. The men who act on such principles have a constant motive to righteous exertion. They feel how the consequences of whatever they do extend themselves through death into the life to come, and to eternity. They must work while it is day. And their religion pervades all their pursuits. It sanctifies their scientific attainments, and their industrious labors. Whatever benefits their fellow-creatures, makes themselves more fit for heaven. Whatever purifies and exalts their own characters, is heaven commencing in them. Grace and glory are with them but different views of the same thing. The duty and the recompense, instead of a merely positive and arbitrary connexion, are inseparable and even identified. Death does not break the continuity of their moral being. Here and hereafter their existence is alike directed towards accomplishing the great end of their creation. For this purpose was the gospel proclaimed; for this Christ came, renewing in man the image of his Maker; for this was death abolished, and heaven and earth were united and reconciled, and the kingdom of God established, in all the universality of its spirit, its influences, and its promises.

But this light yet shines in the darkness. This great and glorious work is impeded not only in the world, but in the church, not only by the unbelieving and the profligate, but by the professors of Christianity itself. They first separate man's conversion, that is, his becoming a Christian, from his own exertions. They represent him as made so by a supernatural operation. They divide the effect from the cause, and deny the latter, while they desire the former. This is a vain attempt to honor the Deity. He is not less honored in the laws of the menta

and moral world than he is in the seeming interruption of those of the physical world. He is not less the great agent of the universe in nature than in miracle. There is no good done as to the religious feeling, but much evil as to moral activity. Religion is made passive in its origin. Man is initiated into Christianity by being told that he can do nothing. A false impression is produced, which tends to put him wrong through the whole of his course. He must not attempt by moral acts to generate in himself the spiritual life, but wait for its communication. There is no gradation for him to ascend. It is everything or nothing; and at this point that everything must be done for him, and not by him. What can be more calculated to leave the sinner in his sinfulness; to furnish self-justification to the impenitent; to dismay the timid; to puff up with spiritual pride the bold; and to turn all aside from solid, practical godliness, to the ever-varying and often deceptive emotions of their minds or their animal frames?

And then, when the spiritual life is supposed to be imparted, how is it to be manifested? Here, again, it is too common for them to separate what is called holiness from the real duties of man upon the earth. What constitutes the good and godly man, in the common estimation of religionists? It is notorious that the duties which become so simply because they are means, are placed in the very first rank. Heaven forbid that we should undervalue prayer and praise, both private and social; reading the Scriptures, hearing sermons; but their worth is in their use. It is our duty to form our characters to the devotion and benevolence which, rightly employed, they may be made so powerfully to promote in

us. Their obligation is secondary, not primary; it relates not so much to themselves as to their influences. It is a fearful mischief that they are so often raised, as habit or opinion raises wealth, from being pursued as means for an ulterior object, to being themselves the final object. They do not constitute the good man, the real Christian. How extensively have religionists been alienated from the great duties of social life! Engaged in praying and proselyting, how seldom they act upon the public mind and public institutions and conduct, so as to imbue them with the spirit of the gospel! How else could it be that even the progress of natural science should still often have to struggle with theological prejudices in Christian countries? That slavery should still exist in Christian countries? That war should still be waged between Christian nations? That the administration of justice should still be so imperfect under Christian legislation! That many and some most grinding oppressions should still be practised in Christian communities? That universal education, whatever approximations are made, should still be so limited, both as to extent and as to the worth of the instruction, as it is in Christian countries? That to all great advances in the state of society there should still be such mighty obstacles as there are in Christian states? That institutions framed and conducted for the express object of elevating the moral, mental, and physical condition of the great mass of the people, should still be almost unknown in the arrangements of Christian nations?

In devotion to such aims as these, combined with the diligent cultivation of the personal and domestic virtues, is the Christian character exhibited. But these graft not well on the stock of popular systems; nor have they ever

borne, nor seem they ever likely to bear, a harvest of such fruit. They are stigmatized as worldly aims; if they be, it is in the sense in which, among others, Christ came to save the world, and make his followers the salt of the earth. They are now the largest sphere for those good works without which faith is dead. Were it not the honest blunder of fanaticism, it would be the pitiful excuse of servility or selfishness, that should exclude them from the sphere of religion and morality. The presence of the gospel in a country ought always to be visible by an atmosphere of knowledge, freedom, happiness, and improvement, ever spreading and brightening around it. Nothing can more degrade Christianity, than taking this class of actions from under its cognizance, because it belongs to business, and that, because it belongs to politics, and thus isolating religion from everything else, and stripping it bare of all its social strength and glory. Whatever benefits men, in any of their relations, that is righteousness and true holiness.

Hence the mischief also of the further separation which religionists make between this world and the world to come. They seem to look for happiness rather in a perpetual act of worship, than in the continued development of principles which here are the source of goodness and felicity. Their preparation for it is, therefore, in such exercises. Its hope does not act upon their social conduct. It is not a perpetual impulse to being good and doing good. We do not, and we cannot trace to their peculiar principles even the great efforts which from time to time are made and making for correcting the errors and evils of the past, and ameliorating the condition of mankind, and leading on the human race in its career of improvement. By mistaking heaven they

us. Their obligation is secon[illegible] heaven into which it lates not so much to them[illegible] O when will men It is a fearful mischief th[illegible] is sown shall be reaped; habit or opinion raise[illegible] bearing precious seed, though means for an ulter[illegible] calumny and opposition and final object. Th[illegible] be found after many days, and real Christian. [illegible] gladden them even in heaven. alienated fro[illegible] in praying [illegible] well, then, and as enlightened, pious, the publi[illegible] men should do, in associating for the as to i[illegible] argument and persuasion, of religious else c[illegible] which will produce a better spirit. They deserve sho[illegible] of Christendom; for they revert, and would induce di[illegible] to revert, to the genuine truths of the gos- e[illegible] pel. They deserve well of their country; for they would restore to it that noblest prerogative and praise, of teaching the nations how to live. They deserve well of humanity; for they would see it created anew in the moral image of its Maker, and bring glory to God in the highest by peace on earth and good-will amongst men.

And in this delineation of social good and social duty, we trace also that of individual duty and good. The intellectual, the moral, the active powers, these make up our nature; their diligent and proportionate cultivation is growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. With knowledge in the mind, love in the heart, and usefulness in the life, we must still expect to encounter the anathema of the bigot, and the scorn of the worldling; but we may also anticipate that He, before whom we and they must appear, will recompense every endurance by declaring, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things."

eries. No. 68.

# E SCRIPTURAL READINGS,

COMPARED WITH

# SOME UNSCRIPTURAL SAYINGS.

BY E. S. GOODWIN.

PRINTED FOR THE

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CHARLES BOWEN, 141 WASHINGTON STREET.
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# SCRIPTURAL READINGS

AND

# UNSCRIPTURAL SAYINGS.

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## SECTION I. — CONCERNING GOD.

I. I read, "There is ONE God." (1 Tim. ii. 5.) — I believe it. I do not read, "There are three Gods." — I do not believe it.

II. I read, "God is ONE." (Gal. iii. 20.) — I believe it. I do not read, "In the Godhead there is a distinction, which affords grounds for the appellations of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." — I do not believe it.

III. I read, "The Lord our God is ONE Lord." (Deut. vi. 4. — Mark xii. 29). — I believe it. I do not read, "In the Godhead there are three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and these three are ONE." — I do not believe it.

IV. I read, "There is....ONE God and Father of all; who is above all, and through all, and in you all." (Eph. iv. 6). — I believe it. I do not read, "God, acting in one mode, is called FATHER; acting in another mode, is called SON; and acting in a third mode, is called HOLY GHOST." — I do not believe it.

V. I read, "The high and lofty ONE, that inhabiteth eternity." (Isa. lvii. 15). — I believe what Isaiah thus

speaks of God. I do not read, that the high and lofty ONE is, in any sense, THREE. — I do not believe it.

VI. I read "Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy ONE of Israel, in the midst of thee." (Isa. xii. 6). — I believe the presence of the Holy ONE of Israel is the true source of sublime joy. I do not read, that the Holy ONE of Israel is THREE. — I do not believe it.

VII. I read, "ONE is your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. xxiii. 9). — I doubt not, this is God. I believe it. I do not read, "THREE are your Fathers in heaven." — I do not believe it.

VIII. I read, "To us there is but ONE God, the Father." (1 Cor. viii. 6). — I believe it. I do not read, "To us there is ONE God, the TRINITY." — I do not believe it.

IX. I read, "God is LOVE." (1 John iv. 8.) — I believe it. I do not read, "God is ENMITY." — I do not believe it.

X. I read, "the LORD is good to ALL; and his tender mercies are over ALL his works." (Ps. cxlv. 9). — I believe it. I do not read, that there is any "respect of persons" with God. — I do not believe there is any.

### SECTION II. — CONCERNING CHRIST.

XI. I read of Jesus, that he "was BORN, in Bethlehem of Judea." (Matt. ii. 1. — see, also, Luke ii. 1 — 11.) — I believe the Scriptural account of his birth. I do not read that "GOD was ever BORN." — I do not believe it.

XII. I read, "Jesus increased in wisdom, and stature, and in favor with GOD and man." (Luke ii. 52.) — I believe it. I do not read, "GOD increased in wisdom, or stature, or in favor with himself and his creatures." — I do not believe it.

XIII. I read, "Jesus himself began to be about *thirty years* of age," (Luke iii. 23,) at the period of his baptism. — I believe it. I do not read, that God ever began to be about *thirty years* of age. — I do not believe it.

XIV. I read, "Jesus, also, being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape, like a dove, upon him." (Luke iii. 21, 22.) — I believe it. I do not read that God was ever baptized, or prayed; or that the Holy Ghost descended on him. — I do not believe it.

XV. I read, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power." (Acts x. 38.) — I believe it. I do not read, that Jesus so anointed himself. — I do not believe it.

XVI. I read, (words of Christ,) "I proceeded forth, and came from God; neither came I of MYSELF, but HE sent me." (John viii. 42.) — I believe, he did so proceed; and that he so came; and was so sent. I do not read, that he proceeded forth, and came from HIMSELF; nor, that he sent HIMSELF. — I do not believe it.

XVII. I read, "The FATHER sent the SON, to be the Saviour of the world." (1 John iv. 14.) — I believe it. I do not read, "God sent HIMSELF." — I do not believe it.

XVIII. I read, "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God," (John xiii. 3,) acted accordingly. — I believe the statement. I do not read, that Jesus possessed all things in his own right; nor that he *took* all things, by independent power, into his own hands. Nor do I read, that he came from HIMSELF, or went to HIMSELF. — I do not believe either.

XIX. I read, of Jesus, that he "was, in all points,

us. Their obligation is secondary, not primary; it relates not so much to themselves as to their influences. It is a fearful mischief that they are so often raised, as habit or opinion raises wealth, from being pursued as means for an ulterior object, to being themselves the final object. They do not constitute the good man, the real Christian. How extensively have religionists been alienated from the great duties of social life! Engaged in praying and proselyting, how seldom they act upon the public mind and public institutions and conduct, so as to imbue them with the spirit of the gospel! How else could it be that even the progress of natural science should still often have to struggle with theological prejudices in Christian countries? That slavery should still exist in Christian countries? That war should still be waged between Christian nations? That the administration of justice should still be so imperfect under Christian legislation! That many and some most grinding oppressions should still be practised in Christian communities? That universal education, whatever approximations are made, should still be so limited, both as to extent and as to the worth of the instruction, as it is in Christian countries? That to all great advances in the state of society there should still be such mighty obstacles as there are in Christian states? That institutions framed and conducted for the express object of elevating the moral, mental, and physical condition of the great mass of the people, should still be almost unknown in the arrangements of Christian nations?

In devotion to such aims as these, combined with the diligent cultivation of the personal and domestic virtues, is the Christian character exhibited. But these graft not well on the stock of popular systems; nor have they ever

borne, nor seem they ever likely to bear, a harvest of such fruit. They are stigmatized as worldly aims; if they be, it is in the sense in which, among others, Christ came to save the world, and make his followers the salt of the earth. They are now the largest sphere for those good works without which faith is dead. Were it not the honest blunder of fanaticism, it would be the pitiful excuse of servility or selfishness, that should exclude them from the sphere of religion and morality. The presence of the gospel in a country ought always to be visible by an atmosphere of knowledge, freedom, happiness, and improvement, ever spreading and brightening around it. Nothing can more degrade Christianity, than taking this class of actions from under its cognizance, because it belongs to business, and that, because it belongs to politics, and thus isolating religion from everything else, and stripping it bare of all its social strength and glory. Whatever benefits men, in any of their relations, that is righteousness and true holiness.

Hence the mischief also of the further separation which religionists make between this world and the world to come. They seem to look for happiness rather in a perpetual act of worship, than in the continued development of principles which here are the source of goodness and felicity. Their preparation for it is, therefore, in such exercises. Its hope does not act upon their social conduct. It is not a perpetual impulse to being good and doing good. We do not, and we cannot trace to their peculiar principles even the great efforts which from time to time are made and making for correcting the errors and evils of the past, and ameliorating the condition of mankind, and leading on the human race in its career of improvement. By mistaking heaven they

all their ability and energy, that which they hope to become in the kingdom of heaven. The men who act on such principles have a constant motive to righteous exertion. They feel how the consequences of whatever they do extend themselves through death into the life to come, and to eternity. They must work while it is day. And their religion pervades all their pursuits. It sanctifies their scientific attainments, and their industrious labors. Whatever benefits their fellow-creatures, makes themselves more fit for heaven. Whatever purifies and exalts their own characters, is heaven commencing in them. Grace and glory are with them but different views of the same thing. The duty and the recompense, instead of a merely positive and arbitrary connexion, are inseparable and even identified. Death does not break the continuity of their moral being. Here and hereafter their existence is alike directed towards accomplishing the great end of their creation. For this purpose was the gospel proclaimed; for this Christ came, renewing in man the image of his Maker; for this was death abolished, and heaven and earth were united and reconciled, and the kingdom of God established, in all the universality of its spirit, its influences, and its promises.

But this light yet shines in the darkness. This great and glorious work is impeded not only in the world, but in the church, not only by the unbelieving and the profligate, but by the professors of Christianity itself. They first separate man's conversion, that is, his becoming a Christian, from his own exertions. They represent him as made so by a supernatural operation. They divide the effect from the cause, and deny the latter, while they desire the former. This is a vain attempt to honor the *Deity*. He is not less honored in the laws of the menta

and moral world than he is in the seeming interruption of those of the physical world. He is not less the great agent of the universe in nature than in miracle. There is no good done as to the religious feeling, but much evil as to moral activity. Religion is made passive in its origin. Man is initiated into Christianity by being told that he can do nothing. A false impression is produced, which tends to put him wrong through the whole of his course. He must not attempt by moral acts to generate in himself the spiritual life, but wait for its communication. There is no gradation for him to ascend. It is everything or nothing; and at this point that everything must be done for him, and not by him. What can be more calculated to leave the sinner in his sinfulness; to furnish self-justification to the impenitent; to dismay the timid; to puff up with spiritual pride the bold; and to turn all aside from solid, practical godliness, to the ever-varying and often deceptive emotions of their minds or their animal frames?

And then, when the spiritual life is supposed to be imparted, how is it to be manifested? Here, again, it is too common for them to separate what is called holiness from the real duties of man upon the earth. What constitutes the good and godly man, in the common estimation of religionists? It is notorious that the duties which become so simply because they are means, are placed in the very first rank. Heaven forbid that we should undervalue prayer and praise, both private and social; reading the Scriptures, hearing sermons; but their worth is in their use. It is our duty to form our characters to the devotion and benevolence which, rightly employed, they may be made so powerfully to promote in

us. Their obligation is secondary, not primary; it relates not so much to themselves as to their influences. It is a fearful mischief that they are so often raised, as habit or opinion raises wealth, from being pursued as means for an ulterior object, to being themselves the final object. They do not constitute the good man, the real Christian. How extensively have religionists been alienated from the great duties of social life! Engaged in praying and proselyting, how seldom they act upon the public mind and public institutions and conduct, so as to imbue them with the spirit of the gospel! How else could it be that even the progress of natural science should still often have to struggle with theological prejudices in Christian countries? That slavery should still exist in Christian countries? That war should still be waged between Christian nations? That the administration of justice should still be so imperfect under Christian legislation! That many and some most grinding oppressions should still be practised in Christian communities? That universal education, whatever approximations are made, should still be so limited, both as to extent and as to the worth of the instruction, as it is in Christian countries? That to all great advances in the state of society there should still be such mighty obstacles as there are in Christian states? That institutions framed and conducted for the express object of elevating the moral, mental, and physical condition of the great mass of the people, should still be almost unknown in the arrangements of Christian nations?

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lose the glory of making earth the heaven into which it might gradually be transformed. O when will men awake from these dreams? What is sown shall be reaped; and happy they who go forth bearing precious seed, though it be with toil and tears, amid calumny and opposition and scorn, for the results shall be found after many days, and the good of earth may gladden them even in heaven.

Unitarians do well, then, and as enlightened, pious, and benevolent men should do, in associating for the promotion, by argument and persuasion, of religious views which will produce a better spirit. They deserve well of Christendom; for they revert, and would induce all believers to revert, to the genuine truths of the gospel. They deserve well of their country; for they would restore to it that noblest prerogative and praise, of teaching the nations how to live. They deserve well of humanity; for they would see it created anew in the moral image of its Maker, and bring glory to God in the highest by peace on earth and good-will amongst men.

And in this delineation of social good and social duty, we trace also that of individual duty and good. The intellectual, the moral, the active powers, these make up our nature; their diligent and proportionate cultivation is growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. With knowledge in the mind, love in the heart, and usefulness in the life, we must still expect to encounter the anathema of the bigot, and the scorn of the worldling; but we may also anticipate that He, before whom we and they must appear, will recompense every endurance by declaring, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make *thee ruler over* many things."

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# SOME SCRIPTURAL READINGS,

COMPARED WITH

# SOME UNSCRIPTURAL SAYINGS.

BY E. S. GOODWIN.

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— This, then, I believe to be the established and proper mode of Christian prayer; to address God, in the name of Christ.* Happy is he, who obeys this rule of the master; and who receives in himself the accomplishment of the subsequent promise! I do not read, "Whatsoever ye shall ask me in my own name, I will give you." — I do not believe it right for Christians so to pray.

LV. I read, (a direction of the apostle to Christians, in accordance with the precept of our Saviour,) that the disciples should be "Giving thanks, always, for all things, unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Eph. v. 20. compare Coloss. i. 3, 12 — iii. 17.) — I believe this to have been the rule and custom of the earliest Christian worship. I do not read any direction to offer prayers to any other being than the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. — I do not believe it right so to do.

LVI. I read, "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus." (Philipp. iii. 3.) — May the God and Father of our Lord enable us so to worship, and so to rejoice. I do not read, that they are the circumcision, who worship a *First* person in a coequal Trinity, and rejoice in a *Second.* — I do not believe it.

### Section IV. — Concerning Redemption.

LVII. I read, "God so *loved* the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.) — I believe it. I do not read, that God so *hated* the world, that he required full satisfaction to his justice, before he would save the world. — I do not believe it.

* See, also, John xv. 16.

LVIII. I read, "In this was manifested the LOVE of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." (1 John iv. 9.) — I believe it. I do not read that God sent his Son, in order to make a DISPLAY of his retributive justice, or to exhibit his rigid demand of the punishment of sin. — I do not believe it.

LIX. I read, "ALL THINGS are of GOD, who hath reconciled us [the Apostles] to himself [made us *at one* with himself] by Jesus Christ." (2 Cor. v. 18.) — I believe it; and cordially acknowledge the splendid truth, that GOD himself is the ultimate source of all salvation. I do not read, that Christ reconciled God to US. — I do not believe it.

LX. I read, "GOD was, in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." (2 Cor. v. 19.) — I believe it; and rejoice in the thought, that God, of his deep mercy, passes by the transgressions of penitent men, and makes them *at one* with himself by Jesus Christ. I do not read, that Christ *paid* God for our sins; *satisfied* the demands of his justice; or, in any way, rendered the Divine Being more merciful or gracious, than He eternally is. — I do not believe it.

LXI. I read, "According to His mercy, He [God] saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which HE shed on us, abundantly, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour." (Tit. iii. 5, 6.) — I believe it; and have joy in believing that God exerts a saving influence upon the human mind, by means of Christ Jesus, whom He hath raised from the dead. I do not read, that God was dependent on an atonement made by Christ, for an opportunity so to influence men's souls.

— I do not believe it. It is clear, that God saves us "*according to his mercy;*" and, in that mercy, imparts his regenerating, washing, and spiritual renewing to the soul through the Saviour whom "He hath exalted.....for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."

LXII. I read, "The Son of Man came.....to give his life a ransom for many." (Matt. xx. 28.) — I believe it. I do not read, that this *ransom* was a payment made to God, as a satisfaction to his wrath. — I do not believe it.

LXIII. I read, "He appeared, to *put away* sin, by the sacrifice of himself." (Heb. ix. 26.) — I believe it. I do not read, that he appeared, to be made an object, in which the Divine vengeance should be *displayed.* — I do not believe it.

LXIV. I read, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might *destroy* the works of the devil." (1 John iii. 8.) — I believe it. I do not read, "The Son of God was manifested, that he might *pay* for the works of the devil." — I do not believe it.

LXV. I read, "Christ, also, hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God." (1 Pet. iii. 18.) I believe it; that he so suffered; and that the object of his sufferings was, as here stated, to *bring us unto* God; in no sense, to *take us away* from Him. I do not read, that Christ suffered the punishment which our sins deserved. — I do not believe it.

LXVI. I read, (in the song of the elders to the Lamb,) "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us *to* God by thy blood." (Rev. v. 9.) — I believe, they were so redeemed; and may the God of grace give us part in the same redemption. I do not read, "Thou hast redeemed us *from* God by thy blood." I do not believe in any redemption that takes the soul away from God. Certainly,

"the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" is one that *brings us unto* God, to be "justified freely by his grace." (Rom. iii. 24.)

LXVII. I read, concerning Christ, that he gave "himself for us, that he might redeem us *from* all INIQUITY." (Tit. ii. 14.) — It is my prayer that the redemption may be made effectual. I do not read, that he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from the God of justice, or from the justice of God. — I do not believe it.

LXVIII. I read, that he "gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us *from* this present *evil* WORLD, according to the will of God our Father." (Gal. i. 4.) — May this redemption, likewise, be made complete in us all. I do not read, that he gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us *from* God. — I do not believe it. — Contrariwise, he gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from those hard masters, the WORLD, and INIQUITY; and that he might bring us unto God our Father, "that we, being delivered out of the hand of our ENEMIES, might serve him, without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." (Luke i. 74, 75.)

LXIX. I read, "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a *price*." (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.) I am taught, elsewhere, that this *price* is "the precious blood of Christ." (1 Pet. i. 19.) — I believe it; and am conscious of duty, for Christians, to "glorify God in their body and in their spirit, which are God's." (1 Cor. vi. 20.) I do not read, that "by the precious blood of Christ ye are delivered from the action of one part of the Divine character, that ye might receive the benefit of ANOTHER." — I do not believe it.

LXX. I read, of Christ, that he "was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God that raised him from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God." (1 Pet. i. 20, 21.) — I believe, he is effectual to the welfare of those who thus believe. I do not read, that he was manifest, in order to change the Divine purposes toward man, in any way. — I do not believe it.

LXXI. I read, (words of Christ,) "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." (John xiv. 6.) — I believe it. I do not read, that a *satisfaction* made by him is either way, or truth, or life. — I do not believe it.

LXXII. I read, "The last Adam was made a *quickening* spirit." (1 Cor. xv. 45.) — I doubt not it is true of all vital Christians, what the apostle said, "God hath *quickened* us together with Christ." (Eph. ii. 5.) — I would, that all men might reckon themselves "dead, indeed, unto sin, but *alive* unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. vi. 11.) I do not read, that the last Adam is God himself. — I do not believe it.

LXXIII. I read, to Christians, "Ye are risen with him [Christ,] through the faith of the *operation of God*, who hath raised him from the dead." (Coloss. ii. 12.) — I believe it. I do not read, "Ye are risen with him, through faith in a *satisfaction* which he made to Divine justice." — I do not believe it.

LXXIV. I read, "You, being *dead* in your sins...hath He [God] *quickened*, together with him [Christ,] having forgiven all your trespasses." (Coloss. ii. 13.) — I believe it. I do not read, "You, being dead in your sins..... hath he quickened, together with him; having accepted his *sacrifice of atonement*, as an all-sufficient payment for your trespasses." — I do not believe it. Indeed, I do not

read the expression, *sacrifice of atonement*, or, *atoning sacrifice* in all the New Testament.

LXXV. I read, concerning Christ, "It pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell; and, (having made peace by the blood of his cross) by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." (Coloss. i. 19, 20.) — It is a consummation devoutly to be wished. I do not read, that the peace, made by the blood of his cross, consists in a satisfaction rendered to divine justice, or a display made of divine vengeance. — I do not believe it. I am taught, by the same apostle, that this peace consists in *bringing nigh*, those that were *afar off*. (Eph. ii. 12—18.) And, as it pleased the Father, that in "Christ" should all fulness dwell; so do I read, concerning true Christians, "Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." (John i. 16.)

SECTION V. — CONCERNING AN INTEREST IN CHRIST.

LXXVI. I read, "This is *life eternal*, that they might know Thee, the only true GOD, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John xvii. 3.) — I believe it; that the very essence of heavenly peace, energy, and happiness, consists in vital acquaintance with the only true God and Jesus his Messiah. I do not read, that it is life eternal, to be acquainted with the only true God, and Jesus Christ as the same GOD or another. — I do not believe it.

LXXVII. I read, "Except a man be born again, (or, *from above*,) he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John iii. 3.) — I believe it. I do not read, that "man, at his natural birth, is totally depraved." — I do not believe it.

LXXVIII. I read, "As many as are led by the Spirit

of God, they are the sons of God." (Rom. viii. 14.) — I believe it. I do not read, that "men, at their natural birth, are the enemies of God." — I do not believe it.

LXXIX. I read, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the CHRIST, is born of God." (1 John v. 1.) — I believe it. I do not read, "whosoever believeth that Jesus is GOD, is born of God." — I do not believe it.

LXXX. I read, (words of Christ,) "He that believeth in me, hath everlasting life." (John vi. 47.) — I believe it. I do not read, "He that believeth in my *Godhead* hath everlasting life." — I do not believe it.

LXXXI. I read, "Whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins." (Acts x. 43.) — I desire to trust this assurance. I do not read "whosoever believeth in his Godhead, or his atonement, shall receive remission of sins." — I do not believe, that such faith insures such remission.

LXXXII. I read, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath *raised him from the dead*, thou shalt be saved." (Rom. x. 9.) — I believe it. I do not read, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the GOD Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised God from the dead, thou shalt be saved." — I do not believe it.

LXXXIII. I read, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. vii. 21. compare Luke vi. 46 — xiii. 25.) — I believe it. I do not read, that obedience to the will of God is a sin to any one. — I do not believe it.

LXXXIV. I read, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." (John vi. 29). — I believe it. I do not read, that it is the work of God to

trust in an all-sufficient satisfaction, which He has received for our sins. — I do not believe it.

LXXXV. I read, "This is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment." (1 John iii. 23.)— I believe, that whosoever thus believeth and loveth, hath an interest in Christ, and is accepted of God. I do not read, that he who trusteth in himself that he is righteous, and despiseth others, hath an interest in Christ. — I do not believe that such a state of mind gives him such an interest.

LXXXVI. I read, "He that dwelleth in LOVE, dwelleth in God, and God in him." (1 John iv. 16.) — I believe it. I do not read, that he who dwelleth in *enmity*, dwelleth in God, or God in him. — I do not believe it.

LXXXVII. I read, "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the SON of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." (1 John iv. 15.) — I believe it. I do not read, "whosoever shall confess that Jesus is GOD, God dwelleth in him and he in God." — I do not believe that such confession produces such in-dwelling.

LXXXVIII. I read, "In Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but, *faith which worketh by love;* (Gal. v. 6) and....*a new creature* (Gal. vi. 15) and....*keeping the commandments of God.* (1 Cor. vii. 19.) — I believe it. I no not read, that special modes and forms avail to the certain salvation of the soul. — I do not believe it.

LXXXIX. I read, (words of Christ,) "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother." (Mark iii. 35.) — I believe it. I do not read, that whosoever makes high pretensions to religion,

is brother, sister, or mother to Christ. — I do not believe that such pretensions create such relationship.

XC. I read (words of Christ,) "The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God." (John xvi. 27.) — It is a precious saying. I do not read, "the Father himself loveth you, because ye have believed in my *Godhead*, or atonement." — I do not believe that such faith procures the divine approbation.

XCI. I read (words of Christ,) "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." (John xv. 10.) — I believe that he who sincerely endeavors after obedience to Christ, experiences the fulfilment of this word, yea, and of *this*, likewise, — "If a man love ME, he will keep my words, and my FATHER will love him, and WE will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (John xiv. 23.) I do not read, (words of Christ,) "even as I have kept MY OWN commandments and abide in MY OWN love." — I do not believe, that he thought himself to be the God, whose commandments he was keeping, and in whose love he was abiding.

XCII. I read, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." (1 Pet. i. 3, 4.) — I cordially unite in the blessing: I do not read, that it is our GOD Jesus Christ, who hath so raised himself from the dead. — I do not believe it.

XCIII. I read, in a prayer of Christ, "Father, I will that they, also, whom thou hast given me, be with me,

where I am." (John xvii. 24). — I believe, this prayer is accepted. I do not read, that Christians have any separate interest from that of Christ, in time or eternity. — I do not believe it.

XCIV. I read, (a promise of Christ,) "Where I am, there shall also my servant be." (John xii. 26.) — I believe it. I do not read, that Christians, in any world, ought either to expect or desire any lot separate from their master. — I do not believe it.

XCV. I read, (words of Christ,) "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to MY Father, and YOUR Father, and to MY God, and YOUR God." (John xx. 17.)— Then I believe, that the God and Father of Christ, is, also, our Father and God. I do not read, "I ascend unto MYSELF." — I must believe, he was sincere in his words; and that he had a Father and God, to whom he was about to ascend.

XCVI. I read, (words of Christ,) "At that day ye shall know, that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." (John xiv. 20.) — I doubt not the truth of this declaration. I do not read, that Christians are Christ, because they are in Him, and He in them. Nor yet do I read, that He is GOD because He is in God, and God in Him. — I do not believe either the one or the other.

XCVII. I read, "I appoint unto you a kingdom; as my Father hath appointed unto me." (Luke xxii. 29.) — I believe the appointment is effectual. I do not read, that this appointment makes Christians equal with Christ; neither do I read that His appointment from God makes Him equal with God. — I do not believe it.

XCVIII. I read, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev.

iii. 21.)—I doubt not the fulfilment of his promise. I do not read that the sitting of Christians in Christ's throne, makes them Christ. Nor do I read, that his sitting in the Father's throne makes Him GOD. — I do not believe it.

XCIX. I read, "If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He also will deny us." (2 Tim. ii. 11, 12.) — God grant, that we may not be ashamed either of our Master himself, or of his name, or of the disgrace of his cross, though we "go forth unto him *without the camp*, bearing his reproach." (Heb. xiii. 13.) May we be so "planted together in the likeness of his death," that "we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." (Rom. vi. 5.)

C. I read, "All things are *yours*, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are *yours;* and ye are Christ's; and Christ is *God's*." (1 Cor. iii. 21 — 23.) — I believe it. I do not read, "ye are CHRIST, and Christ is GOD." I do not believe it.

Reader, look at your Bible, and see if you read therein the same things with me; and whether you read there any of those things which I herein affirm, that I do not. May peace and good will be with you, and the light of truth guide your way and mine.

1st Series. No. 69.

# THE DOCTRINES

OF THE

# TRINITY AND TRANSUBSTANTIATION

# COMPARED.

PRINTED FOR THE

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# LETTER

TO

# A TRINITARIAN FRIEND.

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My Respected Friend, — In the course of conversation last evening, when you undertook the defence of the Trinity, I was forcibly impressed with the power of mystery to charm the finest understandings. You appeared to be attached to the doctrine, not so much because you were struck with the strength of argument in its favor, from revelation or from reason, as because your imagination was fascinated by its very indefiniteness and obscurity. In your mind, the same grandeur was associated with the mystery of the Trinity, which belongs to the mysteries of our own being, of the operations of Providence, of the system of nature. But I confess, that to me the Trinity recalls no such emotions. Instead of classing it with those sublime subjects of thought, which are suggested by our condition in this world, and our hopes of a future, I should place it among those fictitious creations of a strange fancy, of which the dark ages were fertile.

I have always thought, — and I was confirmed in the opinion by your conversation, — that the doctrine of the Trinity bore a striking analogy to the doctrine of Transubstantiation. You will not be offended, I am sure, with my freedom, if I proceed to point out to your notice some particulars, in which, it appears to me, the two doctrines are very similar.

1. The *statement* of each involves an apparent contradiction. *The doctrine* of Transubstantiation is, that the *bread and wine*, employed in the ordinance of the Lo

Supper, are converted, after consecration by the priest, into the real body and blood of Jesus Christ. The elements retain the same outward appearance, but in reality are entirely changed. To the senses, they still seem to be common bread and wine; but faith regards them as the body and blood of our Lord. You acknowledge the impossibility of believing this. You confess, that no evidence could prove it to your mind. But is there not the same contradiction in the statement of the Trinity? — The statement is, 1. That there is but one God. 2. That the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are three separate persons, each having his own mind, consciousness and will, — each sustaining different offices in the work of redemption. 3. That the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Ghost is God.

Now to my mind, this statement appears to present as palpable a contradiction, as the former. I cannot torture my intellect to perceive the possibility of either of these propositions. It is as easy for me to admit that what the evidence of my senses teaches me is wine, is in reality the blood shed on Calvary, eighteen hundred years ago, as to perceive, that the Father can be God; — the Son, God; — and the Holy Ghost, God, — and yet, that there is but one God. Both the propositions I cannot help regarding as contradictory and impossible.

2. The doctrine of Transubstantiation is defended by passages of Scripture, which, if admitted in their obvious and literal sense, are certainly indubitable proofs. Indeed, the language of our Saviour is more explicit on this point, than it is on the doctrine of the Trinity, as its warmest advocates, I presume, confess. The doctrine of Transubstantiation — unless we bring reason to our aid, *in interpreting* Scripture — is supported by direct quotations from the New Testament. "Except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man, ye have no

life in you." "And he took the bread and said, this is my body, which is given for you." In like manner, "he took the cup and said, this is my blood." By these texts, the believers in Transubstantiation think they demonstrate their doctrine. But the man, who permits his common sense to operate, refutes them on the principles of criticism and sound reason, and shows that the language of Scripture is not to be pressed in its most obvious sense too closely, but that we must look beyond the letter to the spirit.

The analogy which the Trinity bears to this point, is that it is supported by some obvious passages of Scripture. You say that you are convinced of the truth of the doctrine by certain texts in which a triple distinction of the divine nature is implied; or by passages which appear to invest Jesus Christ with the attributes of the Deity. But are these passages as numerous or as forcible as those which the Catholic alleges in favor of Transubstantiation? Why do you not receive *them* in their literal sense? Plainly, because you exercise your reason and cannot admit an impossibility.

On the same grounds, I interpret the texts, apparently in favor of the Trinity, according to my reason. If your argument is just against the Catholic, mine is just against you. To maintain consistency, you must become a Catholic or a Unitarian. If you adopt an opinion, from the literal import of Scripture, without regard to the real import, you must believe in Transubstantiation; but if you refuse to believe a contradiction, though capable of a plausible support from Scripture, you must renounce the Trinity. The Catholic can retort upon you with precisely the same arguments with which you attack the Unitarian; why, then, will you not allow the latter the *same advantage* which you assume, in contending with *the former?*

3. The two doctrines agree in the mode of argument, by which they are supported. A Protestant, reasoning with a believer in Transubstantiation, would argue something in this way; "I cannot believe, as you assert, that the bread and wine of the eucharist are the real body and blood of our Lord, for the supposition contradicts the evidence of my senses. The bread, which is before me, to all appearance is unchanged. It has all the properties which belonged to it before. I perceive its form, color, taste, smell; and I am sure that these are the qualities of real bread."

But to this the Catholic replies; "I admit all that you have asserted. If you think you have made out any argument, you mistake the ground of dispute. You have proved nothing by proving that the element in question has the visible properties of bread; that is granted: but the ground we take is this; that, allowing all you have said, the bread is still, in a mysterious manner, the true body of Christ: its retaining the appearance of bread, is nothing against the conclusion; for our Saviour expressly said, 'this is my body.' Now we must admit this to support the consistency of Scripture. And after all, the whole subject is a solemn mystery, which is not to be investigated too closely by our carnal reason."

How similar the mode of reasoning adopted by the Trinitarian. We say, "that we do not believe the doctrine of the Trinity, because it is inconsistent with the divine Unity. We are convinced by the united testimony of Nature and Revelation, that the Lord our God is ONE LORD. Now, we cannot think at the same time, that he is THREE. Again, we find our Saviour continually spoken of in the New Testament, as the Son of God, — distinct from the Father — and inferior to him; we cannot then believe that he is God, equal with the Father."

To this you reply, "What you say is true. No one

doubts it. To press this point so closely, betrays ignorance of the controversy. Trinitarians hold to the Unity of God, and to the inferiority of the Son to the Father; but at the same time, they believe in the Trinity and the equality of the son with the Father. You gain nothing by proving that the knowledge of Jesus Christ is limited; we admit that, but believe too, that his knowledge is unlimited; you gain nothing by proving that this power was given him by the Father; we admit that, but believe too, that his power is underived and independent; you gain nothing by proving that he is the Son of God, and finite; we admit that, but believe too, that he is God, and infinite. To be sure it is a mystery; but we must submit our carnal reason to the teachings of Scripture."

Now, how this differs from the reasoning of the Roman Catholic, in favor of Transubstantiation, I am unable to perceive. But that reasoning you pronounce sophistical, contradictory, and absurd. You acknowledge that it tends to disturb the foundations of our knowledge and to weaken our confidence in all human opinions. Why then will you persist yourself in an argument, which in another application you see is palpably erroneous? I am sure, that your fair mind must confess the inconsistency, that I have pointed out, and be slow in condemning your brother for being unable to believe that the same being can know all things and yet know but in part; has received all his power from another, and yet possesses it independently; is finite and inferior to God, and infinite and equal to God; while your good sense and knowledge of scriptural interpretation prevents you from agreeing with the Catholic, that Christ intended to be literally understood, when he said this is my body and this is my blood, and the capacity of your mind disables you from believing *that the substance*, which you see before you, with all the *properties of bread*, is actually the flesh of the Son of God.

4. The two doctrines agree, in the support which they have received from men of eminent learning and piety. You say, that the doctrine of the Trinity has been the undisputed doctrine of the church for ages; that thousands have been nurtured, under the influence of its belief, in the principles of a deep and fervent piety; that volumes filled with erudition and argument have been written in its defence; and that the spirits of the just have clung to it in the hour of death, with a strong perception of its truth, and confidence in its power. You point me to the philosophic Leibnitz, the profound Boyle, the devout Doddridge, as witnesses to the truth of the Trinity, and by their testimony you are confirmed in your own belief.

But your argument goes too far. For, if it is good, it proves the mystery of Transubstantiation. If the authority of great names has power to prove that the idea of a Trinity is not inconsistent with the divine Unity, it can prove, also, that the bread of the eucharist is the body of the Lord, without doing violence to human reason. The same considerations, which apply to your doctrine, apply with equal force to the doctrine of the Roman Catholic. That has found advocates and believers among men of distinguished talent and learning. That has been the Orthodox doctrine for ages. That has shed a light over the dying bed. That can number among its adherents such names as Fenelon, Bossuet and Pascal, whose example might sanction any doctrine, which is capable of support by human authority. But what does it prove? Nothing. They were men, fallible men; and on this point, you acknowledge their mistake.— We regard in like manner the names which you adduce. We yield them the claim of *intellect* and piety, but believe they were in error: of *course, their* authority has no weight with us. For if we *were influenced* by the associations, which are suggested *by the* example of the great and good, in the history of

the church, we must not only believe the doctrine of the Trinity but the mystery of Transubstantiation.

5. Both agree, in having been deemed essential to salvation. One of the greatest supports, which the doctrine of the Trinity has received, is the idea that it is a fundamental point of Christianity. This gives you an advantage, in your arguments, with the great majority of inquirers, such as the Roman Catholic church well knows how to use. You tell a man, that the doctrine of the Trinity is true, and that unless he believes it, he hazards the interests of his soul. We tell a man, that the same doctrine is false; but we dare not add that its reception would endanger his salvation. Though by this course, we think we gain in consistency, we are sure we lose in power; though we adhere to Scripture, we lose sight of policy. If we could so far violate our convictions, as to declare that the future happiness of an individual is endangered by his reception of any speculative doctrine, we might present an appalling picture of the evil of believing the Trinity. We should then have an influence with the timid, the melancholy, the desponding, which you possess, but which we do not covet. We could appeal to the fears, with the strength, with which we would address the understanding. While then I concede to you the advantage for proselytism, which you enjoy, in making a belief in the Trinity essential to salvation, I must be permitted to remind you, that it is an advantage which you enjoy in common with the Roman Catholic, who makes a belief in Transubstantiation essential to salvation. He regards you with the same pity, for not being able to agree with him, which you manifest for the Unitarian, for not being able to agree with you. You lament over our blindness, in rejecting the Trinity; he laments with equal compassion over yours, in rejecting Transubstantiation. You warn me of the danger of attending a Unitarian

church; he will warn you of the danger of attending a Protestant church. If, then, I give in to your idea, that I must return to the pale of Trinitarianism, for safety and religious comfort, I must be consistent and follow my Catholic brother into the bosom of the Holy Mother of the church; for not a single argument can you bring to prove the necessity of a belief in the Trinity, which he cannot urge, with equal — I had almost said with tenfold force, to prove the necessity of a belief in Transubstantiation.

6. The two doctrines correspond in their origin. Neither of them, it is acknowledged, is contained in the recorded discourses of the Apostles. Neither is found in the confessions of faith required of the primitive converts. Neither is recognised in the earliest controversies, which agitated the church. No traces of the Trinity or of Transubstantiation are found in ecclesiastical history, until after the apostolic age. But after Christianity began to be corrupted by the speculations of philosophers, both the doctrines were developed and became the subjects of eager contention. You need not that I should inform you, that the doctrine of Transubstantiation received its present form, at the fourth council of the Lateran, in the year 1215, according to the decree of Pope Innocent the Third, who embodied in definite language, the floating opinions, that had risen like a mist, on the purity of the church. But you seem to have forgotten, that the Trinity, — though it dates from an earlier period — is proved by faithful history, to have sprung up subsequently to the times of the Apostles. On this point, you will give credit to a writer of your own sect, — the popular Mosheim — who was too candid, at least in *this instance*, to sacrifice historical accuracy to theological *prejudice*. In his account of the fourth century, having *spoken of* a certain "schismatic pestilence," which

troubled the church, he says, "In the year three hundred and seventeen a *new* contention arose in Egypt upon a subject of much higher importance and with consequences of a yet *more pernicious* nature. The subject of this fatal controversy, which kindled such deplorable divisions, in the Christian world, was the doctrine of *three persons in the Godhead;* a doctrine, which in the three preceding centuries, had happily escaped the vain curiosity of human researches, and been left undefined and undetermined by any particular set of ideas."

"The Emperor Constantine, looking upon the subject of this controversy as *a matter of small importance, and as little connected with the fundamental and essential doctrines of religion*, contented himself at first, with addressing a letter to the contending parties, in which he admonished them, to put an end to their disputes. But when the prince saw that his admonitions were without effect, and that the troubles and commotions which the passions of men too often mingle with religious disputes, were spreading and increasing daily, throughout the empire, he assembled at length, in the year 325, the famous council of Nice in Bithynia, wherein the deputies of the church universal were summoned to put an end to the controversy."

"And in the year 381, a hundred and fifty bishops, at the council of Constantinople, gave the finishing touch to what the council of Nice had left imperfect, and fixed in a full and determinate manner the doctrine of *three* Persons in *one* God, which is as yet received among the generality of Christians."

From this time, the Trinity obtained a strong place, among the doctrines of Orthodoxy, and though Calvin expressed his disapprobation of the word as barbarous and savoring of heathenism, and Melancthon bewailed the *bloody tragedies that it* would cause to be enacted, the *Reformation did* not destroy its roots, and it is still a

prevalent and essential doctrine in all the great churches of Christendom.

The doctrine of Transubstantiation flourished with equal vigor, through many an age of religious darkness, and though it would be too much to say, that it has gone to the tomb of once powerful errors, its springs of life are touched, and it cannot long survive. In this, also, it is my belief that the doctrine of the Trinity corresponds with it.

I will relieve your patience and close this long letter, by touching for a moment on this point. The progress of light and knowledge has been fatal to the belief of Transubstantiation: it will be equally fatal to a belief in the Trinity. I am convinced of this, by the qualifications and explanations, to which its advocates are now accustomed to resort. It is not trusted in its original mystery, but is softened and adorned by the additions of ingenious theologians. But it cannot stand the rude shock of an inquiring age. Reason will refuse to lend its testimony to support a contradiction. Charity will rejoice at the banishment of an error, which has embittered the hearts, and shed the blood of the saints. As the knowledge of the Scriptures increases, the arguments for the Trinity will diminish. Already, many passages once considered indubitable proofs, are given up by its enlightened advocates. Already, many texts apparently strong in favor of the Trinity, have been found to labor under such extreme suspicion, as to render them useless in theological controversy. The history of the past, the character of man, the tendencies of society, are to my mind convincing proofs that the mystery of the Trinity will be rejected from our system of belief, and that the hour cometh, yea, is now come, when the true worshippers shall worship the FATHER in spirit and in truth. That you may be one of *the increasing* number, who acknowledge the Father, as *the only* true God, and Jesus Christ, as his Messenger *and Son*, is the sincere prayer of

Your friend, G. R.

1st Series. No. 70.

ON

# ERRONEOUS VIEWS

OF

# DEATH.

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BY ORVILLE DEWEY.

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PRINTED FOR THE

American Unitarian Association.

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CHARLES BOWEN, 141 WASHINGTON STREET.

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I. R. BUTTS, SCHOOL STREET, BOSTON.

# ERRONEOUS VIEWS OF DEATH.

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CHRISTIANITY was designed to introduce into the world new views and feelings concerning death. We seem to see its character and office typified in the visit of Jesus to the house of Mary and Martha, on occasion of the death of their brother. It was a house of affliction. Wailing and lamentation were heard in it, as they are, at one time or another, in all the dwellings of this world. But our blessed Saviour approached it in a calm consciousness that he was commissioned with a doctrine and clothed with a power that would triumph over death; that death, in fact, was not the end nor the interruption of existence; that death indeed was only death in appearance, while in reality the spirit's life is progressive, ever continued, immortal. What less do his words import, than the annunciation to the world of this new view of mortality? "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall *never* die" — shall die not, at all, forever! The apostles, in like manner, evidently considered themselves as commissioned to teach new views of death. They taught

the christian converts to "sorrow not as others who had no hope." They represented the coming of Christ as designed to "deliver those, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

The severity of this bondage in the ancient world is sufficiently apparent from its funeral customs, and the whole tenor of its writings, and from the very terms by which they represented death as the great calamity of human existence. That language which has conveyed to us the largest portion of ancient literature contains more than thirty epithets, all indicative of the deepest dejection and dread, which were familiarly and constantly applied to this event. Death was denominated the terrible, the mournful, the inexorable, the insatiable. It was cold, cruel, bitter, merciless death. It was represented as deaf to the cries of mortals, unpitying to their miseries. It was the dire necessity, the dark day, the fatal calamity, the iron sleep, the eternal night. Imagination can scarcely conceive of anything more appalling than the scenes of lamentation to which this event gave rise among heathen nations; which came to be a matter of custom and form indeed, but which could never have been a matter of custom and form without having originated in the most horrible ideas of the reality. In the houses of the deceased, for days together, their relations set up the most dismal wailings and outcries of grief. They upbraided the very dead with ingratitude and cruelty for leaving them; so unreasonable and violent was their sorrow. Nor can we easily blame them, if we consider their actual and effective belief. Heaven was to them scarcely more than a dream of poetry. The future world was a world of shadows. In that dim and solemn

land of vision a train of unsubstantial phantoms passed before their eyes; but no living thought or feeling was there — the termination of life was the end of all reality. If it were so, indeed; if this conscious being were to cease at death; if every cherished thought and feeling, which we grasp with all the strength of our souls, were doomed to utter extinction; if the venerated and the loved were to be lost beyond recovery; if all this were true, human nature could not refuse to its sad fate the tribute of inconsolable sorrow. If all this were true, we might justly say, — Speak not to us of consolation — there *is* no consolation; there is no support for such a lot; nothing but dulness can bear it; nothing but indifference can tolerate it, and nothing but idiocy, we were ready to say, could be indifferent to it.

But "thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory" over these awful and overwhelming anticipations. Christianity, we repeat, was designed to introduce into the world new views of death and futurity.

But in this, as in several other respects, we apprehend, that it has made as yet but a feeble impression upon the mass of those who have received it. We have not yet partaken of the cheerfulness, tranquillity, and triumph of him, who "has abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light in the gospel." We have not so "lived and believed" in Jesus, as triumphantly to feel that we "shall never die!" There is more, we are tempted to say, of heathen despondency and dread among us, than of christian hope and trust.

Indeed, the usual treatment of the subject of death is one, as we apprehend, which is scarcely in accordance with the spirit of the Christian religion. The place which

the fear of death occupies in the religious emotions of multitudes, is one which Christianity by no means assigns to it. A consideration of this event, a dread of it, an activity awakened by this dread, a mournful countenance when it is mentioned, and tears shed at a funeral, with many form too large a part of the whole sum and evidence of their piety. To think of death is too often considered as the very beginning of religion; to prepare for it as the very business of religion; and to pass safely through that great ordeal, as the very end of it. Surely, the great object of our religion is not to make us ready for some temporary exigency, nor to meet one dreadful event or moment, but to prepare for the sublime happiness and glory of an immortal life. This glorious aim would justly inspire, cheer, and elevate the soul; but to fix its attention too much upon one point in time, however serious, interesting, and trying in our moral progress and account — thus to fix the attention upon one point of dreadful apprehension, must narrow, depress, and darken the whole noble work of religious endeavor, faith, and fidelity. What effect this tendency of religious sentiment has had, both upon the prevailing religion and irreligion of the times, is a very serious and interesting inquiry, but one which we cannot now pursue much into detail, beyond the hints that will naturally arise in the prosecution of the subject. We will only observe for the present, that mistaken and exaggerated ideas of the evil of death tend evidently to prevent the calm and settled expectation of dying, and rational and just views of the preparation for it. They are fitted to make the impression, that, to be prepared to die, we need some qualification analogous to so dreadful an event; that we need a

state of mind altogether unusual, altogether beyond the simple tenor of a good life, altogether different from the calm and conscientious performance of our common duties. Thus these ideas of death tend to resolve religion into a kind of unnatural excitement or overwhelming agitation. They also occasion the world infinite unhappiness; and, what is worse, an unhappiness closely associated with religion. That bondage through fear of death, from which Christianity was intended to relieve us, still lays its iron yoke upon the timid, the thoughtful, and the anxious; while to the careless multitude, who need to be impressed, an image is presented, which is at once the more terrific and the more useless, because they 'cannot discern the form thereof,' and can give it no steadfast attention.

We must also express our apprehension, that this subject has not always received a proper treatment from the pulpit. Death, it may be, has not been spoken of, in that calm and temperate, though solemn manner, that becomes the christian preacher. It may have been sometimes the argument of his impatience or his displeasure. It may have been made the occasion for eloquence or declamation, when it should have been of calm instruction, or sober and wise admonition. He who regards death as the greatest of calamities, as the most terrible thing that can befall us, has not yet learned Christianity. Sin is worse; odious and besotting vice is worse; and, to a good man, there may be many things in life that are worse than death; especially inaction, unprofitableness, and to disgrace his sacred calling. He who is ever resorting to this subject as a last argument, and on all occasions presenting it to terrify men into their duty, is

yet in the childhood of the christian life, if not among the weak and beggarly elements of a still earlier dispensation.

We must also venture to question much that often passes around the beds of the dying. The last scene should be as far as possible calm and quiet. The infirmity of human nature, the agonies of friendship in such an hour, we would speak of with indulgence; but it should be remembered, that it is our duty, as far as possible, by our resignation and fortitude to sustain the sufferer, that we should not add to the last solemn trial of the sinking spirit the disturbing influence of violent agitation or clamorous grief. He who walks with his friend down that valley of shadows has need to do it with a sustained demeanor, with a calm aspect, with a firm step, with a sympathy full of human gentleness, with a purity full of divine and immortal hope. Above all, religion should not come to the scene of a death-bed, to urge, as a matter of course, its questions or its formalities. Let it speak its holy words, or rest in its holy silence of faith and prayer; but the dying hour is no time for intricate casuistry. Friendship may indeed whisper its anxious inquiry; but formality should speak nothing. Abstruse questions of faith or of experience should not then be agitated; still less should there be such stress laid, as with surprising frequency is done, upon the question, whether the dying man is 'willing to die.' No inquiry could be more unsatisfactory as a test of character; and, indeed, it avails nothing but to spread among the living the false impression, that a preparation for another life is a willingness, when it is unavoidable, to leave this. The reply of the pious and learned President Dwight to all such questions

contains a volume of instruction on this subject. 'My life,' he said to his inquiring friends, 'my life must answer for me.' Neither with technical questions then, nor yet with any indispensable formalities, does religion approach the dying hour. Is there no prayer but that which is formal, loud, and vociferous? Can those who stand around the dying bed, if they are ever capable of prayer, fail, in the silence of their grief, in the extremity of their impotence, to lift up their hearts to God? In that scene, where 'reality is dealing with us,' set forms should not, uncalled for, intrude themselves. To hear, as we have sometimes heard, loud and agonizing voices of prayer, that startled and shocked into temporary consciousness the sinking and bewildered senses of an expiring mortal, has struck us with a horror, that overcame our awe even at death, and seemed to turn the solemnities of dissolution into sacrilegious disorder and confusion. So would we not have our own departure marked; but we would that stillness — where all pray in silence, where the affections of the spirit only move in the hushed atmosphere of death, where the soul breathes its unutterable thoughts — that stillness should settle down upon that last scene that is to usher us into the world of spirits.

But it is time that we should enter more formally upon our design in bringing this subject before our readers, which is, to consider some of those prevailing views of death, which are either erroneous, or which, being just, are nevertheless, through our want of christian faith, suffered to occasion more distress and despondency than they ought. This discrimination of views that are wrong, or of views, which, though right, are suffered to exert a wrong influence upon our feelings, will mark the division

of the subject, which will govern us in what we have now to offer.

We shall speak of this subject, not without solemnity and the tenderness due to a theme so affecting — of these we can scarcely fail — but we shall not speak of it with an awe that forbids us to reason upon it. We shall speak of death as those, who, God helping, do not fear it with any excessive and unreasonable dread. We believe that it is the great course of nature, the appointment of God, a wise and good appointment, and that it is to be met with pious submission, calmness, and trust. We believe in One, who has destroyed "the power of death;" who has come to deliver us from this very fear that has struck so deep a horror into the world, who has unfolded to us the bright and exalting hope of an endless and blessed life.

The dread which is felt of this event has manifested itself in many popular impressions of the most erroneous and indefensible, as well as painful, character.

We call death 'the king of terrors,' and in the conceptions of the body of mankind it is clothed with every terrific attribute. In the excess of fear, their imagination bodies it forth as an actual being. They speak of a person being 'struck with death;' as if there were some dread power that ruled over the last hour of mortal existence. Even this popular phraseology, though it may scarcely be thought to indicate any error to which reflecting minds are liable, is not unworthy of a moment's attention, in connexion with the errors that are prevailing on this subject. Death is the gradual exhaustion of our faculties, the sinking away of the powers of animal life, till they finally cease to act and to be. Now this

process may be hastened or retarded; may have its progress and its different stages; one power after another may yield — the faculty of speech, of hearing, of motion; but to fix on one particular moment rather than another, and to say that *now* the deceased person is 'struck with death,' is to use language without any foundation in philosophy or support from observation. There is no power — there may be precursors indeed, which the experienced may descry with greater or less certainty — but there is no power, that at any one moment strikes a fatal blow; that fastens a hold upon its victim, from which it may not be shaken; that sets its mark upon the diseased frame, as it were the mark of destiny: but 'while there is life there is hope,' and from any state of exhaustion the sinking faculties may rise to a briefer or a longer continuance of life. It is not, in fine, by some mysterious harbinger, that death announces its coming. All decay is but dying; all disease is a progress towards death; every beating pulse is wearing away the channels of life; every breath of the heaving bosom is preparing for the time when it shall breathe no more.

There prevails also an erroneous or an exaggerated idea of many of the circumstances that attend the dying hour.

In particular, it is thought that this final event passes with some dreadful visitation of unknown agony over the departing sufferer. It is imagined that there is some strange and mysterious reluctance in the spirit to leave the body; that it struggles long to retain its hold, and is at last torn with violence from its mortal tenement; and in fine, that this conflict between the soul and the body greatly adds to the pangs of dissolution. But it may be

justly presumed, from what usually appears, that there is no particular nor acute suffering; not more than is often experienced in life; nay, rather, that there is less, because the very powers of suffering are enfeebled, the very capacities of pain are nearly exhausted. Death is to be regarded rather as a sleep than an acute sensation, as a suspension rather than a conflict of our faculties. Our Saviour once said in relation to this event, 'Our friend Lazarus sleepeth.' The martyr Stephen, we are told "fell asleep," though he died amidst the blows and shouts of murderers. And the scripture denominates the pious dead, 'those who sleep in Jesus.' Death is the sleep of the weary. It is repose, the body's repose, after the busy and toilsome day of life.

We have all witnessed perhaps the progress of this change; and what was it? Let our senses and our understanding answer; and not our imagination. What was it, but gradually diminishing strength, feeble utterance, failing perception, and total insensibility? The change, as it passed before us, may have been attended with accidental circumstances of mental experience or bodily sensation; but the change itself, death considered as an event, was only a gradual decline and extinction of the powers of life. This is all which we saw, or could know, as necessarily belonging to this crisis in the progress of our being. And yet, from this ignorance, we allow ourselves to be troubled by the phantoms of agitating conjecture. We imagine, and indeed it is common to say, that because 'no one has returned to tell us what it is to die,' there must be some mysterious and peculiar sensation, some awful physical experience attending it. But we see nothing, we see indications of nothing, and we ought not to presume anything of this nature.

Neither are we to presume that death arouses the mind, in the last moments of its earthly existence, to the keenest attention, or to the most intense action of its powers. The subject, when distinctly contemplated beforehand, may do so; it may often do so in the midst of life; and well were it, if it far more frequently aroused us to do in season the work of life. All we wish to say, is — and we wish to say it to preclude all appeals at once to mysterious fear and unfounded hope — that there is no peculiar, no fearful nor hopeful activity of mind midst the solemnities of dissolution; that, in most cases there is no activity. It is probable, that the exhausted faculties usually sink to their mortal repose, as they do to nightly sleep; and that the convulsive struggles which are sometimes witnessed, are often as unconscious, as those with which we sink to the slumbers of evening rest.

Nor, when the veil of delirium is spread over the mortal hour, can we regard it as the evil that it is often thought to be. It has seemed to us rather, in many cases, as a friendly veil, drawn by the hand of nature over what would otherwise be the agonies of separation, over the anguish that the parent would feel at leaving children orphans and destitute, or that the friend would feel in saying farewell to those who were dearest upon earth. Delirium often interposes, we believe, by the kind providence of God, where nature would be too weak, or faith too infirm for the trial.

Nor yet is there anything but fancy in what is sometimes said of the loneliness of the last hour. To the selfish and the bad, and in proportion as they possess

this character, there is indeed solitude in death, and it may then be doubly felt. But to them there is solitude also in life; solitude in the chamber of sickness, in the hour of retired meditation, nay, and it is oftentimes deeply felt in the throng of society. If we deserve to have friends, they are with us in death as truly as in life; so long as we are conscious of anything earthly, we are conscious of their presence. It may sustain and soothe us, till the last moment of our stay on earth. "I walked with her," — said one who laid down the remains of a beloved companion in a distant land — "I walked with her down the valley of shadows; I wiped the cold damps of death from her forehead; and saw her ascend to the mansions of the blessed!"

But we must hasten briefly to consider some of the errors, that relate, not to the mode or circumstances, but to the nature, the essential character of this solemn event.

When our Saviour says, "He that liveth and believeth in me, shall never die," he adds, "believest thou this?" The question might still be put to multitudes even in a Christian land, and, we doubt not, with the strongest implication of their unbelief. They do not believe it. Death is regarded as the extinction, rather than as the continuance of being. Whatever the words of our theology may say, the real impression upon most minds is, that death sunders almost all the ties that united us to our former existence; that it changes not only our state, but our nature; that the soul, as it travels to the "undiscovered country," is passing beyond the borders of all that it has known, and sought, and valued. We are apt to feel, as if on the passage from life we parted with all that our thoughts had familiarized and our affections

cherished. But is not this an error? We take with us —so to speak — our thinking and conscious selves; and it is no vanity, but a simple truth, to say, in a very important sense, that ourself is our all; for it embraces all our mental acquisitions and attachments, our joys and hopes, our attainments of piety, our treasures of knowledge, all elevated and holy contemplations that we may have indulged in, all our habits of thought and feeling that are estimable and pure, all that is precious in happiness, all that is sacred in memory; and the record of all this death will not erase, but will only impress upon it the seal of perpetuity. It has not erased these things, we may believe, from the venerated and pious minds that have gone before us. The dead, — the departed, should we rather say, — are connected with us by more than the ties of memory. The love that on earth yearned towards us is not dead; the kindness that gladdened us is not dead; the sympathy that bound itself with our fortunes is not dead, nor has it lost its fervor, surely, in the pity of an angel. No; if our Christian guides speak truly, it still yearns towards us, it would still gladden us. It still melts in tenderness over our sorrows. The world of spirits — we know not where it is, whether far or near; but it may as well, for all that we can understand, be near to us, as far distant; and in that fervent love, which knows nothing of change or distance or distinction, it is forever near us. Our friend, if he be the same and not another being — our friend, in whatever world, in whatever sphere, is still our friend. The ties of every virtuous union are, like the virtue which cements them, like the affections of angels, like the love of God which binds them to the eternal throne, immortal.

The evil of making this wide separation, this violent disruption of the present from the future, as well as of other prevailing views of death, is in many ways great. Our thoughts do not easily pass to live in the future, or to draw from it the motives of action. Our theological views of this subject, our contemplations of futurity, are too much like the ancient poetic dreams of an Elysian land and a Tartarean region, visionary and ineffectual. There is a fearful retribution, there is a sublime beatitude, we admit; but our conceptions of both are vague and unreal; and our fear does not deter us from sin, and our hope does not allure us to purity and heaven. Between us and our future recompense we look upon death as "a great gulf fixed," and it cuts off the communication of our thoughts. Between the good and the bad a great gulf is fixed indeed, but not between us and the departed. Death is not that gulf; yet we so regard it. We do not sufficiently consider it as a stage, a necessary stage in the progress of being; as a natural passage from the childhood to the maturity of our existence. We are deterred too from the thoughts of futurity, by the imaginary glooms and mysteries of the entrance to it. Even the most attractive ideas of a future life, even a spiritual relish for its joys, and a conscience free from alarms, could scarcely overcome our reluctance to so fearful and dismal an approach to it. We could hardly think of home, or welcome the prospect of admission there, if we must pass to it through unknown conflicts and woes, if we could reach it only by braving the horrors of shipwreck, if we could gain its threshold only by rushing over the burning ruins of a conflagration.

Again; death is commonly regarded as the visitation

of God's wrath, as the fruit and punishment of sin. We do not forget the language of scripture on this subject; that "death entered into the world by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." It is to be remembered however, that in many passages where death is said to be the fruit of sin the word death is used figuratively; that mortality is not meant, but misery. This may be seen in the whole of that account which is given of Paul's experience and reasonings in the seventh and eighth chapters of the Epistle to the Romans; and in other instances. And upon the text before quoted it has been justly argued, that the death which 'entered by sin,' is not the specific calamity of being mortal, but all the evil brought upon us by sin, including whatever is evil in mortality itself. That all this is meant by the word death, we say, has been argued from the circumstance, that it is set in contrast with all the benefits derived from the interposition of our Saviour. As these benefits include more than mere continuance of life, so, it is contended, the contrasted evil which sin is said to introduce cannot be death to the body merely, but rather death to the soul; that is, misery, fear, disquietude and gloom.* And it might be still more strongly urged, with reference to this point, that, if mortality were the specific and only evil meant in that passage, it is said to be removed by the interposition of our Saviour. This is the very point which we are laboring to establish. Jesus Christ has abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light in the gospel. He has presented new views of mortality. He has taught us, that it is the

* I. B. Koppe in Rom. V. 12.

death of the body only; that the good man, that the spirit of goodness which is in him, that the intrinsic and intellectual being, "shall never die."

We are not however anxious to deny, for it is obviously true, that sin has given a complexion to this event; that it has, to a certain extent, connected pain, and doubt, and gloom with mortality. In some respects we can see this influence. Sin, which partly consists in the undue indulgence of the body, has made all our diseases more severe and painful. Sin too has clouded and darkened the mind, and filled it with inquietude and fear. Sin then, we repeat, has given a complexion to this event. It has made our departure from this world, not a translation, but a death.

Yet surely the departure, simply considered, is not to be regarded as an ordination of God's wrath, but of his infinite goodness. Whatever is universal and unavoidable must always be held to be good. Sin only, the choice of man, is essentially evil. Events, laws, the ordinances of God, are ever good. When we approach the dwelling where death has entered, when we join the circle of mourning friends and kindred, over which the mortal stroke has just brought its stupifying horror or its heart-rending agony, when that solemn silence, that dread vacuity of death is around us, broken only by the sighs and shudderings of grief and despair, we are apt at first to feel as if we stood in some awful chasm where God is not, or in some overshadowing cloud where he is present only in displeasure. But when we remember that this is the inevitable lot, that there are thousands of such scenes passing every hour on earth, ten thousand human hearts rent with like sorrow, we are ready to ask —

Can this universal fate be otherwise than an ordination of wisdom and goodness? Can the unvarying allotment, to which all the creatures, to which all the children of God are subject, be vindictive? Can that, which befalls all earthly beings, fills all time, and spreads before the eye of Heaven such an uninterrupted scene — can it be a signal measure of God's wrath? The catastrophe, in the darkest view of it, would not be so horrible as the supposition which thus explains it.

Besides, a dissolution of the body, and a departure from this world, results from the very nature and necessity of things. The human frame is not made to live always, and the earth as evidently was not designed to support the accumulating generations of mankind. Nay, more; departure at some time or other from this life, so far from being a penal requisition, must to every reflecting mind appear in the highest degree desirable. Let the question be put to our calmer and loftier reflections, and there can be no other answer. *Would* we live always? Would we always bear the burden of imperfection and infirmity? Would we always pant for knowledge and happiness that we cannot attain; and shall we ever cling to that load of flesh and of all the ills that flesh is heir to, which drags us down to the earth? No; we would die; we would depart; we would be released and be at rest. We might desire to mount on the winged chariot of Elijah; but it has pleased God to appoint for us a different way. Be it so, that it is for our sins, or that our sins have cast a shadow over the passage out of this world; shall we not then the more humbly and submissively yield ourselves to it? — not with terror, not

with slavish dread, for God does not chasten, even for our sins, in unpitying wrath, but in tender mercy.

We would not then live always. Earth could not bear us. Humanity could not bear its load. Still more; the mind could not be satisfied. It would ask for other scenes, for other regions, for other sources of knowledge, for other fountains of joy. We would depart, then; and this is but saying, that we would die. We must yield our powers to the sleep of death, that we may awake to a new life. We must change the form and mode of our existence, that we may exist in a higher sphere. We must cease to live as men, that we may begin to live as angels. The unsightly worm must sink to inaction and death, that it may rise from its grovelling in the dust, that it may become an inhabitant of the air, that it may unfold its wings in a new region, and become the creature of life and beauty that God designed it to be. The soul in like manner must drop its "mortal coil," that the now undeveloped, the half dormant powers, that mysteriously sleep within it, may awake to their own intellectual and immortal life. It may be as unconscious now of what it is hereafter to become, as the reptile that crawls upon the earth is of rising to the air and light of heaven. The transformation may be as great, and as much more glorious, as intellect is more glorious than dark and blind instinct. Nor may death be the soul's last transformation. "There shall be no more death," indeed; but there may be many changes in its mode of being, while it is passing from glory to glory, through its everlasting progress.

But we must not delay longer to consider some of those views of death, which are indeed more just than

those already noticed, but which nevertheless are liable to be wrested into error, through the excessive dread which is entertained of this event. Mortality is not the interruption of being, nor is it any peculiar visitation of God's wrath; but it is still a serious crisis in our existence; and our views of it are not likely to be too serious, if we will only guard our seriousness from superstition, and from all irrational and extravagant influences of the imagination.

Death is a serious event, inasmuch as we are taught that "after death is the judgment." With regard to the formalities of that judgment, if it can be supposed that there are any formalities, we know nothing. The passages in scripture which speak of a throne and a tribunal, or which speak of the soul as *meeting* its Judge after death, are evidently figurative, and teach us only the general truth, that there is a solemn and strict retribution awaiting us. We cannot *meet* the universal presence in which we ever are; in which we are now as truly as we ever can be, though we may be hereafter more conscious of it; and we cannot reasonably suppose that the soul is to be called to any literal bar. But there will be a trial of conscience, under circumstances which will give to conscience all its power; and if we could understand what that must be, we should feel that no formalities could add to the fearfulness of that coming hour. It will be enough to leave the sinful man alone with his conscience, to strip him of all the blinding delusions of sense and passion, to strip him of all this world's distinctions, and all its treacherous maxims, and its supporting example and its flattering countenance, to throw aside every screen and veil of self-deception, and

to empower memory in that all-searching light to call from oblivion every past misdeed, every erring thought, every guilty passion, and every secret and disguised offence; and this, we believe, is the judgment that shall be, in the presence of God and of conscience, after death. Men may do wrong now, and boast of it, may purpose evil and glory in its accomplishment, may oppress and injure, and silence the voice of remonstrance; but an hour of unveiled retribution is approaching them; the time is near when every evil gratification and unjust deed shall become a piercing arrow of conviction.—Forms, appearances, shall soon give place to realities; the body's enslaving control, to the spirit's action and life; and passion, indulgence, sin, to the manifested and the no longer mistaken judgment of Heaven.

There is a passage in the memoirs of a distinguished author, which we confess strikes us, whenever we read it, with nothing less than the profoundest awe. He mentions an individual, who, though entirely unlearned and ignorant, was accustomed in fits of insanity to repeat with great fluency long passages from Latin and Hebrew writers. The phenomenon drew much attention, and was thought by some to be capable of no other explanation, than that of referring it to demoniacal possession. After much inquiry it was ascertained, that this individual had in early life resided in the family of a learned clergyman, who was accustomed to read and repeat aloud passages from his favorite authors; and the excitement of insanity had quickened the slumbering memory of the hearer to recall, with such amazing distinctness, the faded and forgotten images of past impressions. "And this," exclaims the writer, "this, perchance, is the

dread book of judgment, in whose mysterious language every idle word is recorded! Yea, in the very nature of the living spirit, it may be more possible that heaven and earth should pass away, than that a single act, a single thought, should be loosened or lost from that living chain of causes," which has formed the abiding character of the soul.*

Still however, solemn and justly solemn as this view of death and of the revelation of a future life is, it is possible to lay too great, or at least too exclusive, a stress upon that event which is to unfold to us those revelations. Every future moment — not that of death only, not that of the judgment which is immediately to follow —but every future moment of our being is to answer for every present moment. This is the great law of retribution. None less strict, or less severe belongs to our moral nature. And it does not apply to the future life only, but equally to the present; and all the difference is, that it is now less clearly seen and felt. And it does not apply to any one epoch alone, but to all the periods, to all the moments of our endless being. It is not death then that we should fear, but the eternal retribution of conscience. It is not at the moment of death that we should tremble, but at every moment of the future that is to answer for the neglects, and errors, and offences of the misspent past. Virtue is deathless. It is more; it is blessed life. On the "path of the just, that shineth brighter and brighter," no shadow abideth. The shade of death itself but opens the way to a brighter and more glorious existence. Nay, we must declare a stricter doctrine than this. Virtue *alone* is thus deathless. He who

* Biographia Literaria, Chap. VI.

will not obey the great moral laws of his nature, he who lives in hostility to his conscience and in estrangement from his God, can have nothing said to him to mitigate his fears of the mortal hour. He must fear it; he must in reason fear every future hour, and every future scene. If hell is dreadful to the sinful man, heaven would be more dreadful; if the company of evil beings can yield him no joy, the society of heavenly beings would fill him with despite and agony. Whither shall he flee? Where shall he go to escape fear or misery, whose present courses are raising up enemies in every future habit, feeling, and remembrance of his soul? Whither, did we say? Alas! it is not time or place only, it is not circumstance or situation, it is not the revealing light or the overshadowing darkness; but it is himself, that he has made an enemy and an avenger more dreadful than death!

Again; death is the separation of friends. And we are not of those, who can speak lightly of this separation. We have heard of some who were able to lift up a radiant and almost smiling countenance over the earthly remains of all that was dearest on earth; but it enters not into our conception to regard it as anything but extravagance and enthusiasm. We do not take upon us to set limits to the support which God may give to bereaved friendship or afflicted piety; but that triumph in the countenance, surely, is not their fit demeanor. No; the sundering stroke of death is stern, and cold, and bitter reality.

We have sometimes ventured to wonder, and that in the more fervent meditation upon God's goodness, why the trial is made so severe, and for a time so almost in-

consolable. Could one glimpse, we have been ready to say, could one glimpse of the future world be opened to us, could the situation of the departed for one moment be made known to us; or might it have been the order of Providence that families should be removed at once and together to the "spirit land"—but reflection and faith have soon arisen to check the remonstrances and questionings of anxious and yearning affection, and have soon shown, as they usually do, that God's providence is wiser than our own hasty presumption. Were families removed together, how certainly would our social affections gather up and concentrate themselves upon those narrow circles, and all the evils—the peculiarities, the prejudices, the selfish and exclusive attachments—of that limited intercourse, to which we are already sufficiently liable, would be inflicted on society; and all the benefits of a wide and generous diffusion and reciprocation of sentiments and feelings would be cut off from the social body. If, again, the future world were opened to us, it might produce in us an utter distaste to this; it might disturb the well balanced and wisely ordered influences, under which we were made to act in the present state. If we could see, what we so ardently long to behold, beyond this veil of earthly shadows, we might have no eyes for the scene around us; we might be rapt in meditation, when we are called to the action and trial of all our virtues.

It was evidently designed, that we should be trained up here, by a severe and lofty discipline, for some glorious state of being and enjoyment hereafter. The moral economy under which we are placed, the spiritual life on earth, was not designed to be vision, but faith,—not

rapture, but trial. The departure of friends and kindred to another world irresistibly draws our thoughts thither, and constantly renders us more indifferent to acquisitions and objects here. Heaven claims our treasures, that our hearts may be there also. Faith, moreover, in the invisible, the spiritual, the eternal, is the appropriate faith of beings whose welfare lies in the invisible mind, whose nature is spiritual, and whose destiny immortal. It is meet that we should be trained by the influences of a world which we see not, and from which no sound reaches us. It is our happiness, also, not only to love God, but to love him with the fervor and assurance of perfect trust. Love is ever doubtful, without that trial—and it is but an impassioned feeling, without that quality — of absolute confidence.

Yet a little while therefore are we required to wait, till we can behold those objects and those beings, on whom, next to God, it is right that our hearts should be set. The interval will not be too long for the trial of our faith, and the preparation of all our virtues; not too long to prepare us for the blessedness of a future life; nay, it may not be found too long to prepare us *to die*, as the Christian should die. To meet the last hour calmly, to resign all the objects which our senses have made familiar and dear, in the lofty expectation of better things for the mind, is itself a great act of faith, and one for which many days' reflection and experience may not be too much to prepare us. To take our last look at the countenances of beloved friends and companions; to close our eyes to the bright vision of nature; to bid adieu to earth, sky, waters; to feel, for the last time, the thrill of rapture with which this fair and glorious scene of things

has so often touched the soul — this is an hour for faith unshaken in the immortality of virtue, and for trust unbounded in the love of God, and for the triumphant assurance which long tried and lofty experience alone can give. The feelings of the infidel Rousseau have seemed to us thus far natural, and such as even a Christian may entertain. When he apprehended that his last hour drew near, he desired the windows of his apartment to be opened, that he might "have the pleasure," as he said, "of beholding nature once more. How lovely she is!" he exclaimed; "how pure and serene is the day! O Nature! thou art grand indeed!"* Yet not as Rousseau died, does the Christian die; but with a better trust.

And with that trust, with a firm confidence in the perpetuity of all pious and virtuous friendships, there is much, surely, to mitigate the pain of a temporary separation. Let us remember too, that we do submit to frequent separations in this life, that our friends wander from us over trackless waters and to far distant continents, and that we are still happy in the assurance that they live. And though, by the same providence of God that has guarded them here, they are called to pass beyond the visible precincts of this present existence, let us feel that they still live. God's universe is not explored, when we have surveyed islands, and oceans, and the shores of earth's spreading continents. There are other regions, where the footsteps of the happy and immortal are treading the paths of life. Would we call them back to these abodes of infirmity and sin? Would we involve them again in these toils, and pains, and temptations? Or shall we sorrow for them, as those who have no hope?

* Grimm's Correspondence.

No; we would rather go, and die with them. What do we say? We will rather go, and live with them forever!

But, the awful entrance to the world of spirits — may still be our exclamation — how dark and desolate is that passage! It is a fearful thing to die. Nature abhors dissolution.

Let something of this be admitted, but let it not be too much. Does nature abhor dissolution? Behold the signs of decay and dissolution which the season now spreads around us. Behold nature in her annual death — the precursor of renovated life. But we will not argue from emblems. We will admit that a living being must naturally dread to part with life. But he dreads to part with life, only in a greater measure, as he dreads to part with everything that is his. He is averse to the loss of property, and in some instances almost as much so as to the loss of life itself. He is reluctant to part with any one of his senses; and this reluctance, compared with the natural dread of death, is in full proportion to the value of that organ. Let us rationally look at the subject in this light. Doubtless we dread the loss of the sense of hearing, for instance; and, when that is entirely gone from us, hearing is dead. We dread the loss of sight; and, that light extinguished, seeing is dead. Thus one faculty after another departs from us, and death is at work within us, while we say that we are in the midst of life. So let us regard it. So let us familiarise to our minds the thoughts of death, and feel that this dreaded enemy, dreaded partly because imagined to be so distant and unknown, has already made its lodgment in our frame, and by familiar processes is approaching the citadel of life. As disease is making its

inroads upon us and the system is wearing out, as the acuteness of sensation is failing us, and the vigor of bone and muscle is declining, let us say and feel, that we are gradually approaching the extinction of this animal life. Let no skeptic doubts, let no thoughts of annihilation mingle with our apprehensions of mortality; let us believe as Christians, that not the soul, but only the body dies — and death cannot be that dread and abhorrence of nature which we make it.

We fear that we have occasion to crave the patience of our readers for the length to which our discussion has run; but we would dwell upon this point a moment longer — the natural dread of death. It seems to us strange, it seems as if all were wrong, in a world, where from the very constitution of things death must close every scene of human life, where it has reigned for ages over all generations, where the very air we breathe and the dust we tread upon was once animated life — it seems to us most strange and wrong, that this most common, necessary, expedient, and certain of all events should bring such horror and desolation with it; that it should bring such tremendous agitation, as if it were some awful and unprecedented phenomenon; that it should be more than death — a shock, a catastrophe, a convulsion; as if nature, instead of holding on its steady course, were falling into irretrievable ruins.

And that which is strange, is our strangeness to this event. Call sickness, we repeat, call pain, an approach to death. Call the weariness and failure of the limbs and senses, call decay, a dying. It is so; it is a gradual loosening of the cords of life, and a breaking up of its reservoirs and resources. So shall they all, one and

another in succession, give way. "I feel" — will the thoughtful man say — "I feel the pang of suffering, as it were piercing and cutting asunder, one by one, the fine and invisible bonds that hold me to the earth. I feel the gushing current of life within me to be wearing away its own channels. I feel the sharpness of every keen emotion and of every acute and far-penetrating thought, as if it were shortening the moments of the soul's connexion and conflict with the body." So it is, and so shall it be, till at last, "the silver cord is loosened, and the golden bowl is broken, and the pitcher is broken at the fountain, and the wheel is broken at the cistern, and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns unto God who gave it."

No; it is not a strange dispensation. Death is the fellow of all that is earthly; the friend of man alone. It is not an anomaly; it is not a monster in the creation. It is the law, and the lot of nature.

"Not to thy eternal resting-place,
Shalt thou retire alone. * * *
Thou shalt lie down
With patriarchs of the infant world, with kings,
The powerful of the earth, the wise and good,
Fair forms and hoary seers of ages past,
All in one mighty sepulchre. The hills,
Rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun; the vales,
Stretching in pensive quietness between;
The venerable woods, rivers that move
In majesty, and the complaining brooks,
That make the meadows green, and poured round all,
Old ocean's grey and melancholy waste —
Are but the solemn decorations all
Of the great tomb of man."

But of what is it the tomb? Does the spirit die? Do the blessed affections of the soul go down into the dark and silent grave? Oh! no. "The narrow house, and pall, and breathless darkness" and funereal train — these belong not to the soul. They proclaim only the body's dissolution. They but celebrate the vanishing away of the shadow of existence. Man does not die, though the forms of popular speech thus announce his exit. He does not die. We bury, not our friend, but only the form, the vehicle in which for a time our friend lived. That cold, impassive clay is not the friend, the parent, the child, the companion, the cherished being. No, it is not: blessed be God, that we can say, *It is not!* It is the material mould only that earth claims. It is "dust," only, that "descends to dust." The grave! let us break its awful spell, its dread dominion. It is the place where man lays down his weakness, his infirmity, his diseases and sorrows, that he may rise up to a new and glorious life. It is the place where man ceases — in all that is frail and decaying — ceases to be man, that he may be, in glory and blessedness, an angel of light!

Why, then, should we fear death, save as the wicked fear, and must fear it? Why dread to lay down this frail body in its resting-place, and this weary, aching head on the pillow of its repose? Why tremble at this — that in the long sleep of the tomb that body shall suffer disease no more, and pain no more, and hear no more the cries of want nor the groans of distress — and, far retired from the turmoil of life, that violence and change shall pass lightly over it, and the elements shall beat and the storms shall sigh unheard around its lowly

bed? Say, ye aged and infirm! is it the greatest of evils to die? Say, ye children of care and toil! say, ye afflicted and tempted! is it the greatest of evils to die?

Oh! no. Come the last hour, in God's own time! — and a good life and a glorious hope shall make it welcome. Come the hour of release! — and affliction shall make it welcome. Come the hour of reunion with the loved and lost on earth! — and the passionate yearnings of affection, and the strong aspiration of faith, shall bear us to their blessed land. Come death to this body — this burdened, tempted, frail, failing, dying body! — and to the soul, — thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, — to the soul come freedom, light and joy unceasing! come the immortal life! "He that liveth" — saith the Conqueror over death — "he that liveth and believeth in me, shall NEVER DIE!"

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# 'COME AND SEE.'

OR

# THE DUTY OF THOSE WHO DREAD THE SENTIMENTS OF OTHER CHRISTIANS.

BY WM. B. O. PEABODY.

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## 'COME AND SEE.'

To have prejudice is not a crime, it is an infirmity; but to allow ourselves to be governed by prejudice in our actions, judgments, and feelings to others, is no better than a sin. When Nathanael asked with surprise, if it was possible that anything good should proceed from Nazareth, Philip said, 'Come and see.' Now, if he had refused to take the proper means to satisfy his own mind upon the subject, he would have done perpetual injustice to Him who was holy, harmless, and undefiled, and would have lost himself a privilege, which he would not afterwards have surrendered for worlds. He acted like a man who wished, not to indulge his prejudice, but to know the truth, whatever it might be; and as soon as he went and saw, he was convinced that his prejudices were unfounded and unworthy. It would not, however, be possible to give the name of good to one who stands out in his prejudices; for every one is bound to keep his mind always open to light, argument, and conviction; he is bound to prove all things, for till he has done so, he has no security that he is holding fast what is good.

Let us apply the words of Philip to the faith which most of us profess. Though the public feeling is milder than it was, that faith is still spoken against; some regard it with anger and scorn, others with dislike and dread. Now it seems to us to be the duty of those who have such feelings, to ascertain whether there is reason or not to indulge them. How do they know what our opinions are? They ought at least to know what they condemn. Let them 'come and see' whether we exalt human reason above revelation — whether we degrade and dishonor the Son of God—whether we make light of human sin — whether we teach that man's works alone will save him — whether we remove all the fears of future retribution. If they come and see that it is so, then let them bear testimony against us, and they may do it with a good conscience; but if they condemn without a hearing, if they judge our sentiments from the unfriendly representations of others, when they can learn what they are from the best authority, they take a course which it is not easy to reconcile with a right sense of duty.

But some one may tell us, that we speak of the sentiments of other sects, and ask us how we are acquainted with them? We answer that we hear them preached, and advise others to go at times to hear them. If any one is not edified by our preaching, we advise him to go where he can find more acceptable instructions. Moreover, we can learn their sentiments from their creeds and confessions; but we have no creed except the Scriptures, and they cannot learn what construction we put upon the Scriptures, except from ourselves. It is true, they might learn from our writings; but there

is the same aversion to reading our writings, as to hearing our preachers; so that many unfortunately cut themselves off from every opportunity of ever knowing what we believe and profess; and thus, we sometimes find, that those who think they are condemning our sentiments, are condemning sentiments, which we do not believe any more than they; so that we find it necessary to say to them, 'come and see' what those sentiments are, which you condemn as false and ruinous to the soul.

They say that we exalt human reason above the revelation of God. Come and see if it is so. We use our reason to discover what is taught in the Scriptures. There are parts of those writings, which require attention and study to learn their meaning; and in making that inquiry, we use our reason — in other words, we use our minds, not to judge truths which we find taught, but simply to learn what *is* taught by the inspiration of God. Every other sect with which we are acquainted, does precisely the same thing; every sect has its volumes of interpretation, its aids to the right understanding of the scriptures, and invites its followers to use their reason — to examine, compare, and judge — to deliberate long and carefully, in order to ascertain the meaning of the oracles of God. So far, no one can say, that we forget the right province of human reason, or exalt its authority too high. But if they say, that we ever set the conclusions of our reason against the authority of revelation, or to use the common phrase, set reason above revelation, let them come and see; it is a serious charge, and before they bring it against us, they ought to be sure that it is true. If

they come, they will see that we treat the authority of revelation as final and supreme. We bring every doctrine and every duty to the test of scripture; the reason of our rejecting certain doctrines, is, that we cannot find them taught in the Bible; if we did, we should embrace and avow them, as readily as we now disown and cast them away. No man can point to any sentiments which we have rejected, because they are opposed to our reason merely; if we reject them, it is because we think they are not taught of God.

Those who come and see, will find that this charge cannot possibly be true. We cannot exalt reason against revelation, because they always agree; they never are in the least opposed to each other. Every doctrine that we find in the scriptures is a reasonable one — every duty a reasonable service; there is nothing unreasonable in the instructions and demands of christianity. When reason and revelation thus always and in every respect coincide in their testimony, how can it be said that we accept the evidence of one in preference to that of the other? But it is easy to see whence this charge arose. We do not find in the scriptures the same doctrines which some other christians find in the scriptures; our reason teaches us that we must believe what *we* find, and not what *they* find; as we act upon our own responsibility, we must act upon our own conviction. Thus, our reason requires us to reject what they call the doctrines of the gospel, simply because we believe that there are not such doctrines in the gospel. In all this, we bow to the authority of the word of God; we exalt reason no higher than other christians. Their reason teaches them to trust their own interpretation in

preference to ours; our reason teaches us also to read and judge for ourselves; their reason is opposed to revelation as we see and explain it; our reason is opposed to revelation as they see and explain it; but this does not give any right to either party, to charge the other with setting its own reason above the authority of God. It is delightful to us to discover and declare, how entirely the doctrines and duties of Christianity are approved by the judgment of every deliberate mind; and we consider it our duty to show to others, that it is their reasonable service to present themselves a living sacrifice to God.

To come to the subject of our doctrines; let those who think our sentiments false and dangerous, come and see what we teach of God. We do not, we confess, teach that God exists in three persons; we do not, however, reject that doctrine merely because it is a mystery, but because it is not taught in the scriptures. How will those who believe it, account for the fact, that it is no where so stated in the scriptures that they can even give their belief on the subject in scripture words? Would it not be strange, that such a doctrine should be taught only in doubtful and obscure intimations, if it were among the essential truths of the gospel? And how happens it that our Saviour, who doubtless best knew his own nature, should never, so far as appears by the evangelists, have taught this doctrine to his disciples? He constantly speaks of himself as receiving all things from his Father; the whole impression given by what he says of himself, is fully expressed in the words, 'My Father is greater than I;' and when he says, 'I and my Father are one,' he prays, as if in explanation, for

his disciples, 'that they and their Father may be one, *even as we are one.*' The only thing approaching to a statement of this doctrine, which any one professes to find in his words, is in the form of baptism, 'in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost.' But all Christians believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; what resemblance does this bear to the doctrine, that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God? and yet these are not three Gods, but one God. We reject that doctrine because we cannot find it in the scriptures.

There are other doctrines with respect to the divine character, which we do not preach for the same reason; because we do not find them in the scripture. We do not preach that any individuals are elected to eternal happiness or eternal woe. The election spoken of in scripture, is the election of a nation, like the Jews, or of a body of men like the Christians, to enjoy certain privileges which are not given to the rest of the world. To elect men in this way, to superior privileges, is not unjust, because there is after death the judgment, and to whom much is given, of him shall much be required. But to elect them to eternal life or eternal woe, would not be just, because after that, there could be no retribution. The rewards of conduct and character never could be impartially awarded, and a perpetual inequality would remain in the condition and destinies of men, such as cannot exist forever under the government of a just God; he allows the bad to prosper, and the good to suffer in the world, for the sake of trial and improvement, but the retribution will make all things right at last. These privileges to which we are sometimes

elected in this world, are lent, not given; they are trusts, not favors; and they who enjoy them, must answer for the use or abuse of every one. That the Jews were an elected people, or that the Christians are an elected people, has no respect whatever to final salvation, and though Christians, like St Paul, call themselves elect of God, let them like him, fear and labor, lest they be cast away at last. Those who come and see will find that we preach the election of Christians, and the election of character, but not the election of individuals to eternal life. No human ingenuity can give any reason, to show the use or advantage of preaching to men that they are under a destiny which was fixed before they were born. One thing is certain; if that destiny can be altered, it is not fixed; and if it is fixed, it cannot be altered. If it is fixed, the elect to eternal life have nothing to do, nor to dread; and those not elected, cannot gain a hope of heaven, by all that they can do. This doctrine would destroy at once all the hopes and fears of religion, by changing hope into presumptuous assurance, and the fears of the guilty into despair.

Those who come and see, will find that we represent God as sending his Son to reconcile men to each other and to Him. They will not find, that we speak as some others do of the divine wrath and vengeance; we do not believe that such passions can reside in the Almighty; and therefore we cannot suppose, that it was the object of our Savior's coming to reconcile God to us. He never has been unfriendly to us; he has always been kind, forbearing, forgiving, and I may say affectionate to us; it was because 'he so loved the

world that he gave his only begotten Son.' What was needed was, to reconcile men to him; to reconcile them to his character, his providence, his commands and their own duty. Since the enmity is all on the side of man, and God is so invariably merciful that he bears the name of Love, we cannot admit for a moment that the wrath of the Father required to be quenched by the blood of his Son. Our Savior died, and died for men, it is true; but it was man that murdered him; he was destroyed by the hands and the passions of men; it was the love, the unchanging love of God, which gave such power to his death. Through him 'we have received the atonement;' he has opened the way for our reconciliation with God.

Those who come and see, will find that we represent God as a Father; we delight in that resemblance and comparison, not only because it recommends him to our confidence and love, but because it explains to us all that we need and desire to know; we all know what a father is, and what may be expected from a father. A human father is preparing his children for mature and active life; he gives them all the means of improvement and instruction, and assures them that if they waste the spring tide of existence, they will be miserable; if they improve it aright, they will be respectable and happy. In the same way our heavenly Father is preparing his children for the maturer years of the soul. The world is not the place where our lives are to be passed; this life is but the childhood, the preparing time of existence; God gives us the means of improvement here, and assures us that our future destiny shall depend upon the characters we form. Shall a son who becomes

dishonored by his vices, blame his father for his fall? His father did all for him that he could; from the nature of the case, no compulsion—nothing but moral power could be exerted. Shall the soul that perishes, upbraid its heavenly Father with its doom? he exerted upon it all the means and influences to make it holy, which its nature would admit; it *would not be holy*, and therefore *could not be happy*. Shall the guilty say that God, if he is merciful, might then have made it good? There is no such thing as *making good:* goodness is not goodness, unless it is a voluntary thing; it must be the choice and consent of our own hearts, or it is nothing. When we call our God then by the endearing name of Father, besides that the name inspires confidence and love, it teaches us how much we have reason to ask or hope from him, and what weight of obligation rests upon our own souls. He gives us ample power, he sets before us ample inducements, to form the christian character; if we need more aid, he will give it to those who ask it in prayer. He is the guide and guardian of our way; every thing we enjoy in this world or hope for in another, proceeds from his never weary love. His is the kingdom; he is the only sovereign of the soul; his is the power; we can do nothing, but what he enables us to do; his is the glory; he has declared that he will not give it to another; therefore we ascribe the kingdom, the power, and the glory to God alone.

But they say that by representing God as thus forbearing, kind and gracious, we remove all religious fears. Let them come and see. They will find, that there are two kinds of fear. If of two human parents

one is kind and affectionate, the other stern and severe, a child will fear the presence and person of the latter, while he cares little for his displeasure; he will be unwilling to come near him; he will fear the presence of such a parent, as a restraint and burden. On the other hand, the child of a kind parent will love his father's presence, and will treat him with confidence and affection; without fearing his person, he will fear nothing so much as his displeasure. The distinction between fearing the divine person, and fearing the divine displeasure, is not made as it should be. There are some christians, who by representing God as severe and stern, make their followers afraid of *Him*, without inspiring in them the least fear of his displeasure. We think that ours is a more excellent way. By holding up the divine character to the admiration and love of men; by endeavoring to remove that dread of God's presence, which prevents all free and happy communion with him; by showing that he deals with men like a Father, with even more than the tenderness of human affection, we believe that we inspire and increase the fear of the divine displeasure, which in our view, is the only fear which religion aims to awaken. Those who come and see, will find that while we do endeavor to remove such fears as prevent men from going boldly to the throne of grace, and casting their care on their God, we do, by the very same exertion, if we succeed in it, make them fear the divine displeasure more than any thing beside; this is the case with those who seriously and conscientiously embrace our opinions; but in our sect, as well as every other, there are those who for various reasons, wear its colors and range themselves in its lines, while

they do not know its principles, do not feel it spirit, and therefore will not be taken by any just observer as examples of the effect of our faith upon the life and heart.

Secondly, let them come and see what we teach of Jesus Christ.

If they ask of some persons of other sects, what are our sentiments with respect to the Saviour, they will be told, that we represent Jesus Christ as a mere common man. Now it is reasonable to ask, why they believe this is true? Have they ever heard it declared by one of our number? No! they have received that impression from those, who have a strong dislike to our sentiments, and who, like themselves, have never taken pains to ascertain whether it is true. Ask them why they charge us with saying that he is no more than man, they will offer no evidence of the fact, but will simply reply, that we must necessarily represent him as nothing more than man, if we will not allow that he is God. This, it will be observed, is their assertion, not ours; and yet on the strength of this assertion, they charge us with preaching a doctrine, which no man ever heard us preach — which no man knows that we believe; they take those sentiments which they *think it likely* that we believe; not what *they have ascertained* that we believe, nor what they have heard us express. Thus they accuse, try, and condemn us, with no better evidence than suspicion.

Let them come and see; they will hear our sentiments preached without reserve; let them see if this is among them. They will find that we represent that wonderful being as inferior to the Father, and to the

Father alone. We believe the Father to be one being and the Son another; they are one, only as 'he that planteth and watereth are one.' They will find, that we represent Jesus Christ as far exalted above the children of men,—fitted alike in his nature, character and powers, to be the Saviour, Mediator, and Judge of the world. Those who have made this charge against us, will make it still; it was founded upon nothing we have ever said, and therefore nothing that we can say, will induce them to retract it. But to those who are willing to hear, we repeat, that our doctrine is simply this, that Jesus Christ was inferior to the Father, and the Father alone; of all beings, with one exception, he is by far the most exalted. While we believe in the divinity of his character, of his office, and his power,—in the divinity of his actions and his words, we ought not to be charged with making him a mere common man, simply for saying that he is a being distinct from and inferior to the Almighty. We cannot read the words, 'This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent,' without the conviction, that the beings there named, are entirely distinct from each other; nor can we feel as if it were a crime to say in the very words of inspiration, 'to us there is but one God, the Father.'

But they say that our faith deprives the world of an all-sufficient Saviour. If they will come, they will see that we do not, as they imagine, represent Jesus Christ as a man, attempting to save the world by merely human power. He said, 'all power is given unto me, in heaven and earth;' such is the power which resides in his hands, and which he employs for the salvation of

men; let those who say that this is insufficient, say what greater power can there be? Is it thought dishonorable to the Saviour, to say that 'all things were *delivered* unto him by the Father?'—will that power be less effectual, because God gave it, than if it had been his own? If, as he said, he could of himself do nothing, still, when armed with the power of God, he can do all that is needed for the salvation of men. 'The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save.' The divine power remains the same; it can be no greater if there are three persons in the Godhead; it can be no less if there is but one; no views of religion can represent it as more than infinite; none can make it less; and when Jesus Christ comes to us in his Father's name, we feel as much confidence in his power to aid us, as if he acted on his own authority and employed his own power. Let them no longer complain that we deprive men of an all-sufficient Saviour; let them not say of us again, 'they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him;' let them remember that she who made the complaint, if she had understood the scripture, would not have looked for him there. No one had taken her Lord away, but she was seeking him where he was not to be found; and Jesus was standing by her, at the very moment when she was lamenting him as lost forever.

Neither will they find that when we say that the Father is superior to the Son, we deprive the Son of that reverence, gratitude and love that should be paid him, and that are paid him by every sincere Christian, whatever name he bears. Though he was not God, it is not the less true, that he did all that could be done for

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us; he endured all that nature could bear for us; he gave up all that could be sacrificed for us; for us he submitted to the humiliation, dishonor and suffering of life; for us he died in agony, when he had finished the work that was given him to do. Does any one deny that he endured the cross,— that his spirit gushed forth in blood? does any one deny that he suffered this anguish of body and mind, which we tremble to think of, for our salvation? does any one say that his death was not needed, or that the Lamb of God had no power in his death to take away the sin of the world? If any believe that we deny these things, let them come; let them join with us to remember that Friend, whose love was stronger than death; let them unite in our devotions, and they will not say again that we hold the services, the sufferings, or the death of our Master in light esteem: they will find ours joined with the thousand voices, which say, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and glory and blessing;' they will not find us silent, when all that are in heaven and earth say, 'Blessing and honor, and glory and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever.'

Still they say, that our faith respecting the Saviour is a cold and dreary system, which chills all the religious affections, and spreads a sort of winter over the soul. Our faith believes in God the Father, in Jesus Christ the Saviour, in eternity, in retribution; how can it be a cold system, so long as thoughts like these have power to warm the soul? Let those who say this, come; they will see that our system is not colder to them, than

theirs is to us. If they read our writings and hear our preaching with a strong feeling of dislike and dread, how can it be otherwise than cold to them? Nothing that men dislike and disbelieve, ever has power to warm the heart; so that when they call our faith cold and dreary, they simply mean that they do not believe it; and they are no judges of its effect on those who do believe it. Do they say that we are cold? We confess that it is so; we lament that so little warm and pure religious affection appears in any party; we see enough fires of religious passion burning; we see men zealous enough, in advancing the influence and interests of their own party; we see them constant enough in services of devotion, which they themselves have made; but we see but little anywhere, of that pure, warm, peaceful and benevolent feeling, which christianity labors to inspire. And one reason of this deficiency seems to be, that where religious passions prevail, they keep down and destroy religious feelings; the loud and violent passion, and the gentle and fervent feeling, cannot live together—cannot be inmates of the same breast. We will not say that the faith of other christians is cold, because we are no judges of its effects on them; every faith is cold to the breast that does not give it a friendly welcome; nor will we allow that others are any judges of the effect of our sentiments, till they believe them, love them, apply them to their lives, and in that way make trial of their power.

Having stated that it is the duty of those who dislike our sentiments with respect to God and the Saviour to ascertain what our sentiments really are before they

condemn, we now proceed to our opinions respecting the character, duty and destiny of man.

They say that our preaching on this subject is moral preaching. This is thought to be a reproach; but before they condemn us, let them come and see what this morality is, which is considered so dangerous to the soul. The morality which we preach and hear, is not heathen morality—not our duty, as it is understood by those who never have been enlightened by the gospel; not merely the duties we owe to society, of justice, kindness and truth; not merely the duties we owe ourselves, of prudence, care and self-improvement; it includes also in its broad circle, the duties of love, confidence, heavenly mindedness and prayer, which we owe to our Father in heaven. Thus this preaching covers the whole ground of christian duty, including not only actions, but the principles and feelings that govern human actions. If it concerned itself with conduct only, there might be some reason for saying, that, weighed in the balances it would be found wanting; for the heart is the source of holiness as well as of sin; and our religion teaches us to look to the heart as the fountain head, and when it is corrupt, to cast in a branch from the tree of life to heal the bitter waters. But at the same time our religion teaches us that the deeds are essential, because they show the state of the heart; so essential that 'God shall render to every man according to his deeds;' so essential, that 'they that have done good shall come to the resurrection of life;' so essential, that our Saviour, in his sermon on the mount, that perfect summary of our religion, said, without one word of what are now called essential doctrines,

'Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock.'

But it is said that the word morality is not commonly thought to include so much; it is applied to men of regular habits and decent conduct, who neither have, or pretend to have religious feelings; therefore to call our preaching moral, gives the impression that it is not serious, deep-toned nor awakening. It certainly does; but who calls it moral preaching? If *we* gave it that name, it would be a different thing; but we do not; that name is given by those who dislike our sentiments; it is given in reproach; it gives *their* impression, no doubt, but it is not a correct impression; we will not say that we preach morality, because we know it would be misunderstood; we say that we preach and hear christian duty—the great duty of love to God and man. Let it be remembered, that this name is given to our preaching, not by those who hear it; not by those who have the means of knowing what it is; it is given by those who do not hear it; who are not willing that others should hear it; and who, if they did hear it, would listen with a jealous suspicion, which would prevent their judging impartially. Those who come, will find that we preach all the duties of the gospel, and all the doctrines of the gospel; not certainly all the doctrines which others find in the gospel; for unless *we* find them there, no man can undertake to say that it is our duty to preach them. We do not say that we preach morality; because, true as it is, it has given a wrong impression; but that wrong impression has not been made by our preaching, nor by any name applied to it by ourselves.

It is probable however, that others, when they give this name to our preaching, mean that we do not attempt to inspire religious feeling; that we lay all stress on religious conduct, without regard to religious affections. Let them come, and they will see that this charge cannot possibly be true; for we hold that there can be no such thing as consistently religious conduct without religious feeling; that the religious conduct will be earnest and devoted, in exact proportion as the religious feeling grows fervent and high; and therefore we labor to inspire religious affections, because without them, men can never be what christianity was meant to make them. But we urge men to cherish such feelings as are constant and self-sustained, and not to rely upon rising and falling emotions. We desire to see these affections appear not in sudden and momentary flashes, but burning with the steady brightness of a lamp to the feet. There may be some, who fear lest religious feeling shall run into excess. It is not so with us; we know, that there can be no excess in true religious feeling; however fast, however far it goes, it will confine itself to the strait and narrow path of duty. When we dwell on the unbounded love of God—a love, which all the thanklessness of man has never chilled; on the glorious self-devotion of his Son, whose love was stronger than death, for those who were no friends to him; when we remember all that their unrequited love has done for our happiness, for our improvement and salvation, we trust that some answering chord of gratitude is struck, some feeling is excited in every heart that is not stone.

But it is so manifestly impossible for any religion to

exist without religious feeling, that when they charge us with preaching morality only, they may mean that we do not insist upon the duty of devotion. Let them come and see. They will find that we represent prayer as the breath of life to the christian; that the child can as well say that he loves his parent while he always shuns his presence, as the christian profess to be faithful without communion with God. They will find that we urge upon all men the duty of prayer in the sanctuary, of prayer in retirement, of prayer at the family altar; and those who do not pray, cannot say that our faith allows, excuses, or defends their neglect of duty. It is true, that we do not consider all prayer as devotion; we think that prayer should be fervent rather than long, and that devotion should be calmly breathed from the depths of the soul. It is true, that we have little confidence in the piety of those who neglect their active duties for the sake of multiplied devotions, for such incense is not acceptable to the Most High; but if any think that we do not teach and impress the duty of prayer, let them come and see that however it may be with ourselves, our faith is not wanting; it insists on holy lips and holy lives; but it judges of the devotion by the life rather than of the life by the devotion.

They say that we make light of sin and of the change which christianity requires. Do we indeed deny the depravity of man? Let them come and see if it is so. They will find that we represent the world as sunk in wickedness; the hearts of the guilty are steeped in it, and we find its defacing stains in the best human hearts; we behold the great family of man in a state which is awful to every one who cares for the welfare

of his race — a state which would fill the heart with despair, were it not for the power of christianity. No one can think of the great world, trodden with armies, ground by oppression, darkened with ignorance and red with sin; no one can think of any single heart whose best purposes are so often overborne by temptation, whose best thoughts find it so hard to struggle upwards into life and action, without the conviction that 'if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves;' and every christian thinks with sorrow and shame of his own transgressions, his thoughtlessness, his indifference to eternity, and his ingratitude to God. Such is the state of man. But what are we to do? Are we to sit down to inquire how and whence this depravity came, or are we to arise and endeavor to remove it? When we see the conflagration spreading from house to house, and from street to street, are we to inquire how and by whom it was kindled, or should we exert ourselves to extinguish it? The gospel contains the injunction of our duty. It tells but incidentally, how and whence this depravity came, while it tells us plainly, repeatedly, and as if it were its main object to tell us, how it may be done away. All this is confirmed by our Savior's example; he did not give his hearers the history of sin; he was too diligently employed in taking away the sin of the world.

Having this mistaken impression that we make light of sin, it is but natural for them to suppose that we are not aware of the greatness of the change necessary to bring men to the holiness of the gospel. Let them come and see. They will find that we represent that change as so great that it is compared in Scripture to

a new birth; instead of being called a change in the life, it is spoken of as beginning life anew. When one who has been guilty, repents, and is renewed in the spirit of his mind; when one who has never heard of Christ, listens to the glad tidings of salvation at last, and welcomes the sound with rapture to his heart; when the child with the dew of his youth still upon him, begins to think deeply and seriously of God,—each begins life anew; it is the greatest of all possible changes; it is passing from a life which ends at the grave to one that never ends: it is as if the corruptible were already putting on incorruption, and the mortal, immortality. When the heart has been long and firmly bound to the world, the conversion will generally be sudden; the bands of sin must be cut asunder at a blow; there is no hope of him who trifles, delays, and falters. But whether the conversion is sudden or slow, it is only a beginning; it does not bring them at once to the perfect stature of the christian, and if they count themselves to have attained, they are in danger of presumption. When the good seed has been sown in ground fitted to receive it, 'first appears the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear;' in all husbandry, a long season of patient industry must pass before the harvest is gathered in; the plants which spring up to their full growth rapidly will wither because they have no depth of earth, while those which are cultivated aright will keep growing till the harvest, which is the end of the world, and the reapers of which are the angels.

Those who come will find that we consider it essential to pass through the change of heart and life which

makes one a christian. No one believes that we are born holy; no one thinks that any human being comes into life with the christian character formed. We are born into an animal life, where the influences that act upon us are those of the senses and passions. Christianity would have us born anew into a spiritual life, that we may live, not according to the flesh and its impulses, but according to the affections and principles of that religion which teaches us that we are immortal. The human heart resembles the soil of the garden; if it is cultivated, it will reward the hand of labor with its harvest of fruits and flowers; if neglected, it will be covered with useless and perhaps with poisonous verdure. So the heart cannot be left to itself; the same neglect which would change the paradise into a desert, would assuredly make the heart of man a waste and desolate ruin. It was never meant to be left to itself; it is made over in childhood to the care of parents that they may be the means under God of giving this spiritual life to their children; but till the religious character is formed in young or old, they are children of the world — with hopes and feelings which never look beyond the world. Since it is the object of christianity to make us feel and act as children of God, and this change cannot begin too soon, God has called us early, and early should we seek his face. He has ordained that those to whom the child is indebted for life should be the parents of his immortal life also. When he wonders why they bow with reverence before a presence which he cannot see; and they give him the first knowledge of his heavenly Father; when they lead him to sweet and sacred thoughtfulness by

the simple story or the plaintive hymn; then perhaps that change is beginning which will make him a christian in this life and number him with the blessed in another: they may not observe his progress, but it may result in that conversion which the gospel regards as the beginning of the christian life in the soul.

Those who come, may find that we consider the change itself the important thing; and therefore regard, less perhaps than some other sects, the accidental circumstances that may have attended it. The great question is, has the heart been turned to God? if so, we care less for an answer to the question, when and where was it so converted? It is a momentous thing to ascertain whether this change has taken place in the soul; and the scripture has left no uncertainty in a matter of so great importance. It teaches us that 'every one that doeth righteousness is born of God;' and by this it means, not the righteousness of a heathen nor a Jew, but the righteousness of a sincere and heavenly minded christian. If we see a man whose life and conversation declare that he holds communion with God and finds pleasure in the acts and inspirations of devotion; whose light shines round, in his kindness to the miserable, his sympathy with the happy, and the benevolence which he feels for all; if we see him consistent in his righteousness, and faithful through all the joys and sorrows of his life, we have no need to ask farther questions; we have no doubt that his heart is turned to God; we should no more deny him to be a christian, because he could not tell the precise moment of his conversion, than we should deny him to be a

human being, because he could not tell when and where he was born.

Another charge against our sentiments is, that they encourage men to believe that they can be saved by their own merits and works alone. This is never said by any who have heard our preaching or read our writings with candor; if there are any who believe it, let them come and see if any such doctrine is taught by those who profess our opinions. They will find that our belief on the subject is precisely the same with that expressed in the words, 'By grace ye are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.' We are not so unacquainted with human nature; we are not such strangers to human sin; we are not so ignorant of our own unworthiness, as to use such a word as human merit in the presence of God. We know that salvation is absolutely and entirely a gift of love; the world had done nothing to deserve it; it is a gift infinitely transcending the loftiest deserving of man. So far from holding this belief ourselves, we do not believe it possible that any man in his right mind ever regarded everlasting happiness as nothing more than the just and reasonable reward of human merit and exertion; it is against nature; if any are charged with it, they must be misunderstood. But whatever others believe, our faith on this subject is, that man is entirely indebted for salvation to the mercy of God through Jesus Christ his Son; to this, and to this alone.

But they say, we preach that a man must work out his own salvation. That same doctrine was preached before we preached it, by one who certainly was well acquainted with the doctrines and duties of christianity. But let them come and see what is meant by it; it is a

scripture phrase, and before they say that we use it improperly, let them listen to our explanation. Subsistence is the gift of God, but man must work out his own subsistence; he must prepare the ground, he must sow the seed, he must gather the harvest. But does he conceive himself less indebted to the kindness of his God? Does he think that if bread was supplied to him so that he need not labor at all, it would be better for his health, for his character, for his improvement? So far from it, he knows that it is the kindness of God which imposes the necessity of labor upon him, and that it is done for his own good. In the same manner and for the same reason, God has required men to labor for their own salvation; they must inquire into the nature, study the language, acquire the habits, and form the character suited to that heavenly country to which they hope to go. They must make that preparation to enjoy it, without which, the gift would lose its value. That God has imposed this necessity on man, so far from lessening our gratitude for his goodness, only makes us feel yet more deeply, that salvation is a gift of glorious and unbounded love.

But they ask if we say that men are not unprofitable servants. They are not profitable to God as one man can be profitable to another, but they may be profitable to themselves. 'Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous?' What can he gain by the best obedience of man? But it must be remembered that to be unprofitable is one thing, and to be unfaithful is another; and we cannot allow that because our obedience is unprofitable to God, it is a matter of small importance whether or not we are faithful in duty. We may resort to the beautiful illustration which unlocks

all the mysteries of the gospel, we may ask if a child's fidelity to his parents' instruction, can ever repay the debt of gratitude he owes for a parents' love? can the child say, that by obedience he has discharged his obligations for that love which watched for him when he was sleeping, which his coldness and ingratitude could never alter? No! though his obedience is not profitable to his father, it is the best proof he can give of his grateful affection; without it he is worthless; though his best obedience, so far from giving him a claim to new rewards, does not repay what he has received from his father's hands. So it is with the children of God. Important as their obedience is, we do not believe that it discharges the debt of gratitude which they already owe; still less do we believe that they can establish upon it any farther claim to his favors or rewards.

But they say that we do not speak of works as they are spoken of in the scriptures. Let them come and see. The scriptures do indeed speak slightingly of *works;* but we have never seen the passage where they speak thus of *good works.* The works which they condemned were the fasts, ceremonies, and sacrifices, which many of the Jews relied upon, even after they had become Christians; they answered precisely to the works by which some mistaken Christians at the present day, hope, without obedience, to gain the favor of God. By such works of hollow and formal sanctity — works not done from any religious feeling, — no flesh could be justified. But the language used respecting good works was very different; it was the design of christianity to make men 'zealous of good works;' our

Saviour charged his disciples to let men see their good works, in order to induce them to glorify the heavenly Father. This distinction has not been properly regarded; we endeavor to regard it; we remember how sternly it was said, 'your new moons, your calling of assemblies, I cannot away with: it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting;' on such works we counsel none to rely; but we remember that it was said at the same time, 'put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well.' These good works we earnestly recommend and enjoin, not because they can merit salvation — not because they can establish a claim on the Most High; but because we are told that they who love the Father will keep his commands; and these good works are important, because they are the only substantial proof we can give of our love to God.

There is yet another charge — they say that we remove all fears of the future; let them come and see if it is so. We certainly endeavor to move men by dwelling on the goodness of God, because it is that goodness, which, we are assured, 'leadeth to repentance.' We use persuasive rather than alarming language, because we do not wish to see men starting up in sudden fright as if awakened by the midnight fire-bell; and herein we follow the example of him who said, 'knowing the terrors of the Lord we persuade men;' it is not because we believe that there are no terrors, but because we think it better to draw men to obedience with bands of love. If we went so far as to deny that men have any need to fear, there would be more reason for the charge; but it is not so; we see and lament the freedom from uneasiness which every where prevails; every where we say, because we do

not admit the genuineness of that earnestness which is lighted by the flame of party; we shall therefore still endeavor to win men to Christ by the persuasion of gentleness and love.

But this is not all; they think we teach that no man has anything to fear in the future world; in other words, that all will be happy as soon as they pass over the boundary of the grave. If we believed that doctrine we should avow it; but there is no shadow of reason for saying that we believe it, except that we do not say that those who believe it are not Christians. Their opinions are their own; we are to answer only for ours. But we do not agree in any single point of doctrine with those who teach that all the suffering occasioned by sin ends in the present world. We think that when a man enters another life, he enters it in the state of moral improvement or moral guilt, in which he departed from this world. We know of no pleasures there which the guilty can enjoy; we know of nothing there which can drown the feeling of uneasiness and pain; we know of no sleep in which they can forget their sorrows; therefore we think they must be miserable, unless they are greatly changed by passing through the grave. Of such a change we see no intimation — no evidence whatever. They will leave their bodies in the grave, but their sins must go with them, because their sins are in the soul; the body can no more sin than any other clay; it is the soul which sins, and which must suffer if it is guilty. We reproach no other sect when we say that we believe that the judgment is not here, but after death; there, every man shall receive according to his deeds — they that

have done good shall come to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of despair.

But they say that if we believe not this, we believe in the final restoration of all to heaven; that if there is suffering in the future world, it will have an end at last. Let them come and see. If we believed that doctrine we should declare it, for we have never learned to be ashamed of any sincere convictions. But we do not believe in the restoration of all the guilty, because we do not find it taught in the scriptures. If we considered the punishment inflicted by God, we might believe that it would pass away; but we regard it as self-inflicted; men are free both in choice and action, and they bring this misery on themselves against the counsel and warning of God. We believe it to be the unalterable order of nature that happiness shall be produced by goodness, and that misery shall follow sin. These consequences are before us; if we choose to sin, we choose to suffer. When a child is told by his father that if he does wrong he will suffer, he has no right to say that his father inflicts the punishment which he suffers; nor do we believe that the punishment of sin is any more directly inflicted by our God.

Men can never, in this world or another, be happy without being good. We do not say that all men will not be finally happy, but we find no assurance that they will. This, however, is a subject on which we do not enlarge; we leave it where the gospel left it; we do not try to lift the awful, deep and heavy veil which hangs over the eternal world. We use the words of scripture; we dictate to no one what meaning he shall give them; we leave all to the Most High, knowing that the guilty will suffer all that is just and nothing

more than is just; we consider it our duty rather to warn men to fly from the wrath to come.

Such are some of the points in which we have been misunderstood. When there are so many proofs that we have been misunderstood, we call upon other Christians to come and see, that they may not so mistake us. We think it is but a reasonable demand. It was said even before the prejudiced Hebrew council, 'Doth our law judge any man before it hear him?' let the candor of the Christian be at least equal to that of the Jew. We cannot trust the report of anything which we hear, after it has passed through the lips of one or two; how then is it possible to judge fairly by report, of the opinions of a religious party?

We lament that we must use that word religious party; we lament that Christians should be armed against each other; but we can see no end to disunion, till all admit that men are answerable for their sentiments to God and to God alone. We should make it our endeavor to know the truth — not what others say is truth, but what we find is truth in the scriptures; and we should hold ourselves ready at any moment to give up our present sentiments, if we find that the scripture does not sustain them. We would endeavor to keep an open heart; and if there are any opinions which bring better evidence than ours — any, that have a stronger tendency to produce true love to God and man — any that have more power to make bad men good and good men better — then may our system perish, whatever feelings may be wounded by its fall! may all the pages in which it is engrossed be scattered to the winds of heaven! may every vestige of it sink, and be found no more forever!

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# MR TUCKERMAN'S

# ELEVENTH SEMIANNUAL REPORT,

AS A

MINISTER AT LARGE IN BOSTON.

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# REPORT.

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To the Executive Committee of the

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

GENTLEMEN,—On the 29th of February, 1832, a commission was appointed by our House of Representatives, 'to prepare, digest, and report to the next Legislature, such modifications, or changes in the pauper system of the Commonwealth, as they may deem expedient; to appoint an agent to visit the principal establishments in the Commonwealth and elsewhere, for the public charge and support of the poor; to collect the statistics of these institutions, and to report the facts so obtained to the Commissioners.' I was one of the Commissioners for these objects; and, at the request of the gentlemen associated with me, undertook the agency here referred to. By causes, however, which at the time I thought sufficient, the business of this agency was delayed till late in the last year. I was thus prevented from visiting many towns in the Commonwealth, which it had been my intention to visit for the above-named purposes, and had no leisure left to me for going beyond the bounds of our own State. Nor was this all. A Report was to be made to the Legislature at as early a day as possible

in its last session; and a meeting of the commissioners, for an examination of the facts I had collected, could not be obtained till very near the time when their Report must be presented. On me, therefore, devolved as well the work of writing the Report, as of preparing the statements and tables which are appended to it. I refer to these circumstances, because I wish to avail myself of this opportunity of adverting again to some of the topics of that Report. The measures proposed in it are referred to the next meeting of the Legislature; and the Report, with a bill for carrying these measures into operation, has been sent to every town in the Commonwealth, that the whole subject may be fairly brought before the whole people. It is a subject which has strong claims to very serious attention, for it involves great interests, both pecuniary and moral. Assured, however, as I am, of the correctness of the principles assumed in that Report, and aware of the very defective manner in which they are there developed, I am glad of an opportunity to recur to them; and happy indeed shall I be, if I may thus do anything to lead to better provisions than have yet been made among us for the charge and support of the poor, and for the remedy and prevention of pauperism and crime.

The leading principles to which I would call your attention are, that provisions for the poor are the proper objects, not of legal enactment, but of christian humanity and charity; — that this humanity and charity, if left unfettered by legal enactments, are sufficient for the security of the best provisions which can be made for all the classes of the indigent and necessitous; — and, that the result of interpositions of human laws to secure *obedience* to the moral law of charity, ever has been,

and is, an increased, and even frightfully increasing extent of the beggary and crime, which these laws have been intended to remedy. The first question which here naturally arises, is, what are the facts in the case? To facts, then, let us appeal.

The influence which poor-laws have exerted upon pauperism in England, is, I well know, a question upon which her statesmen and philanthropists have held, and still hold, very different opinions. Nor is it to be doubted that other causes than poor-laws have alone produced an equal, or a greater pauperism elsewhere. The pauperism of Ireland, for example, where there are no poor-laws, is even far more extensive and dreadful than that of England. But, on this subject, no fair comparison can be instituted between England and Ireland. With the exception of Poland, Ireland has been, and is, the most cruelly oppressed country in Christendom; and, in her oppressions, which I need not enumerate, we have causes sufficient to account for any conceivable want, and degradation, and wretchedness, to which the population there, or any where, could be reduced. Not so is it with pauperism in England. There it has grown with the very progress of liberty; and, even under circumstances of the greatest prosperity in all the departments of human enterprise. There, too, it has called forth an unexampled voluntary assessment for its relief; and yet it has grown under the combined pressure of these measures for keeping it down. How, then, is this fact to be accounted for? Let me refer you, for a moment, to the history of English Poor-Laws, and I think you will be satisfied that they are, in part at least, accountable for the extent and miseries of English pauperism.

The earliest legislative act respecting the poor in England, of which I have seen any notice, is that of the twenty-third of Edward III., in 1349. By this act, 'persons were declared guilty of an offence in relieving beggars able to work.' A very different measure followed in the twelfth of Richard II., 1388. It was then 'directed that *the ordinary, or clergy of the district*, should receive collections, and distribute them to the impotent poor.' This is the first legal requisition for the support of the poor of which I have any knowledge; and 'the practice' under it, it is said, 'was, that if any person did not contribute charitable alms for the poor, he was summoned before the ordinary, who reproved him. If he was contumacious, he was summoned before the Ecclesiastical Court, and might be excommunicated; and then served with a Bishop's, or Chancery writ, which confiscated the whole of his effects, and imprisoned him for life.' How far this law secured an abundance of *alms* for the poor, I know not. That it could not have excited charity in the heart, or have led to the contribution of 'charitable alms,' will, I think, be most manifest to every one. That it did not lessen the number, or improve the character of the poor, is intimated by the enactment 'in 1495, the eleventh of Henry VII.,' by which 'vagabonds were to be put into the stocks for three days and nights, and to be fed upon bread and water; and any person who should relieve them with food was to forfeit twelve pence, (three shillings).' These vagabonds were the able-bodied beggars of the time; and the punishment here inflicted upon beggary implies that the evil had become a greatly increased one, and that it was thought to have demanded a very strong remedy. 'Eight years afterwards, these laws *were confirmed*.' But 'in 1535,' a new principle was

adopted. In that year, three hundred and seventysix of the smaller monasteries were suppressed by Henry VIII.; and others were confiscated by him in subsequent years. Many who had received relief, or support in these institutions, were thus compelled to seek for aid, or for subsistence elsewhere. It was therefore 'enacted that all governors of shires, cities, hundreds, hamlets, and parishes, should make provision for the poor by receiving charitable alms, so that no poor person should go a begging. Thus the relieving of the poor was taken from the ecclesiastical, and given to the civil power. Nor was this the only extraordinary provision in this case. 'Persons making "open dole," or giving money in alms otherwise than to the poor boxes in each parish, were to forfeit ten times the value.' Thus, all almsgiving, except through the parish poor boxes, was not only forbidden; but every act of free charity was declared by the law to be criminal, or at least punishable, in proportion to its approximation to the liberality of Christian benevolence. I know not what was the extent of poverty at that time in England. But, allowing for great exaggeration in the statement, it must have been fearfully extensive and aggravated, since we are told, that, 'during the reign of Henry VIII., a period of thirtyseven years, and when the population was scarcely more than a third of its present number, seventytwo thousand persons were executed for theft and robbery, and; that the prisoners for debt and crime amounted at one time to sixty thousand persons. Sturdy beggars, for the first offence, were whipt. On a second conviction, they lost an ear. And on the third, they were executed as felons. In the succeeding reign, the Protector Somerset, though remarkable for his popularity, seemed determined, by direct force and terror, to extirpate

vagabonds. The first act of his administration declared, that if any person shall apprehend a runagate, who had lived disorderly for three days, and shall take him before two justices, the vagrant was to be branded with the letter V, and was to be adjudged a slave to the person who had apprehended him for two years. This person might also beat, chain, and put the vagrant to labor never so vile, and might feed him upon bread and water, and refuse him meat. If the vagrant should absent himself fourteen days, he was to be branded on the cheek with the letter S, (slave) and was to be a slave forever. If he ran away a second time, he was to be executed. For the honor of human nature, this law continued in operation but two years.' But it not only proves the desperate state of the country, but intimates much, I think, to excite suspicion of the moral tendencies of poor laws. At least, it goes far to show, that poor laws had contributed nothing to the suppression of pauperism. 'In 1563, the 5th of Elizabeth, an act was passed to appoint collectors of voluntary contributions, who should also distribute them weekly, so that none should sit a begging. If any parishioner obstinately refused to pay reasonably for the relief of the poor, the justices were empowered to tax him a reasonable weekly sum; upon his refusal to pay which, he was to be imprisoned. And if any parish had more impotent poor than it was able to maintain, the justices were empowered to license them to beg in the hundreds of their country. At length, after other enactments for the regulation of assessments for the poor, and for the appointment of overseers, the last great act of Elizabeth's life was the pauper law of the 43d of her reign,' which has since been the basis of the poor laws of England. This law

is immensely in advance of all that had preceded it upon the subject. It was as wise, perhaps, as a law could have been, the object of which was, a legal provision for the poor. Many are the revisions under which it has passed during the last two hundred years, and by none of them has it been improved. The population of England, at the time of the passage of this law, is estimated to have been between four and a half, and five millions. The first assessment, in 1601, for carrying it into effect, — that is, for the relief of the impotent poor, and for setting the poor to work, — was £200,000. In the year 1700, when the population was about five and a half millions, the poor rates had increased to £1,000,000. And now they are advanced to nearly £8,000,000, or $35,000,000 ; with a beggary as importunate as want and desperation can make it, even amidst the most extraordinary prosperity ; and with an amount and extent of crime, which make even this beggary a concern of secondary consideration. Now I do not ascribe all this crime and poverty to poor-laws, and poor-rates. Far otherwise. But I may ask, whether there is any ground whatever in the space of history over which we have passed, for the belief that poor-laws and poor-rates have diminished pauperism in England ? I may ask, if these successive enactments, and provisions, do not indicate very unfavorably for the character and tendencies of poor-laws ? And I may also ask, if it be not an unquestionable fact, that, of late years at least, these laws have increased the number and sufferings of the poor, by acting as a bounty at once upon population among the poor, and upon the oppressions of their employers ? Is it said that these are results, not of the law itself, but of the mode of its administration ?

I answer, that the law never was, and it never can be, well administered. It carries in itself, and they are inseparable from it, the principles of all the evils which have come from its mal-administration. The language of the facts I have adduced seems to me to be very unequivocal. The provisions of the fortythird of Elizabeth, and the laws of the founders of our commonwealth, I have no doubt, were intended for good. But they were direct violations of a principle, which is not to be entrenched upon by human legislatures; the principle, I mean, that direct and authoritative prescriptions and enforcements of moral duty belong only to God. Religion has never flourished, except in the cases in which it has been left as free by man, as it has been left by God. And charity to man, as a vital element of religion, must be left as free as love to God, or it will never flourish. The regulating power of these principles is within themselves; or, they are regulated by causes which are beyond the reach of human authority. Attempt by law the enforcement of either, and results will follow, — they have never failed to follow, — which will rebuke the daring presumption. Happy will it be if they shall prevent its recurrence.

The contrast, in this view of them, is very striking between England and Scotland. In the latter country, we are told, 'poor rates were comparatively unknown even when mendicity was ten times more prevalent than at present;' and they continue to be comparatively unknown there to this day. It was indeed most happy for Scotland, that in the time of the extremest wants and degradation of her poor, resort was not had to legislative interference for them. 'In 1745, the state of the country was rude beyond conception; and *the common people, clothed in the* coarsest garb, and starving

*on the meanest fare, lived in despicable huts with their cattle.* In the Highlands, in 1760, the condition of the inhabitants was, if possible, worse than that of the Lowlands. There was scarcely any variety of wretchedness with which they were not obliged to struggle, or rather, to which they were not obliged to submit. *To such an extremity were they frequently reduced, that they had to bleed their cattle that they might subsist for a time upon the blood,* (boiled); and the inhabitants of the glens and valleys repaired in crowds to the shore, a distance of three or four miles, to pick up the scanty provisions which the shell-fish afforded them. Their houses were commonly wretched, dirty hovels, built with stones and mud, and thatched with fern and turf; without chimneys; filled with smoke; black with soot; having low doors, and small holes for windows, with wooden shutters; or, in place of these, often stopped with turf, straw, or fragments of old clothes.' 'The poor, half starved animals, through mere weakness, often could not rise of themselves.' 'At this period, too, *mendicity was extremely prevalent;* and the labors of the peasantry, during harvest, were every now and then interrupted by the necessity of carrying crippled beggars from one farm to another.' 'Now,' on the other hand, 'the laborers are universally well fed, and well clothed. Their cottages are comfortable, and they are all in the enjoyment of luxuries that were formerly never tasted even by rich proprietors. At the same time, also, that mendicity is almost entirely unknown, poor rates have been introduced only in a few instances, and are in all cases exceedingly moderate. At present, indeed, we believe there is not a parish in the whole province of Galloway, assessed for the sup-

port of the poor.' — This is the language of the last October number of the Edinburgh Review. It is asked, from whence came this amelioration of the condition of the peasantry in Scotland? It is attributed, by the reviewer, to 'improvements in agriculture and the arts.' 'We have the best attainable authority for saying,' he adds, 'that we are considerably within the mark when we affirm that the produce of the country has increased *six-fold* since 1770; and, as the population has not quite doubled in the interval, it follows, that, at an average, each individual is now enjoying *three times* more of useful and desirable articles, than were enjoyed by his ancestors, subsequently to the seven years' war.' The arts, however, have advanced as rapidly in England, as in Scotland. Nay, it is said by the Reviewer to be 'admitted on all hands, that the produce of wheat in England and Wales has more than trebled since 1760; and, that, of the whole population of that part of the empire, there is certainly not one eighth part that does not use wheaten bread.' The question arises, why, then, is mendicity so tremendously great in England, and so comparatively small in Scotland? Is it said, that the evil is to be ascribed to 'the injudicious alteration of the poor laws in 1795,' by which the poor rates were employed to eke out the wages of the laborer. But whence came this perversion of the poor laws? From a succession of bad harvests? The seasons, indeed, in England, from 1795 to 1801, were very unfavorable to agriculture, and the wants and sufferings of the poor there were proportionally increased. But have there been no seasons in Scotland greatly unfavorable to its agriculture? What, *then*, has been the resort in Scotland in exigencies like

these? I answer, voluntary assessments in proportion as they were demanded by the exigency; and, when that ceased, the assessments ceased. But in a time of similar pressure in England, new modifications of the poor laws were adopted; for the question, there, of the provision to be made for a season of extraordinary distress, was not one of occasional, and temporary, and free, and sympathising charity. It was, rather, one of the adaptations of a law to the case; of a law which for centuries had been in operation, requiring annual, or more frequent assessments; and to which the poor in England had been as much accustomed to look for supplies, as those in Scotland had been to their own industry. In this single view, then, of poor-laws, their tendencies and consequences seem to me to be most manifest. When I compare the two countries in this respect, I cannot doubt whether it have been a great good to Scotland, that its charity has not been fettered by these laws; or, that they have been a cause, and a principal cause, of what some of its greatest statesmen have designated as the 'frightful pauperism' of England.

I cannot say that there are not other facts, and other views of this subject, which would lead to a different conclusion respecting it. I can only say, that I have looked at the facts which have come under my own observation, or within the narrow scope of my reading upon it, with a very strong impression of the magnitude of the interests which are involved in it; and that, before I undertook the agency for an examination of the actual influences of our own poor-laws, I was decidedly in favor of a modified plan for a State provision for the poor. But in the progress of that examination, I was brought to an entirely different conviction; and this con-

viction has been strengthened by all my subsequent reflections upon the tendencies and bearings of the poor-laws of England. Still, I well know, I may be in error. My aim, however, is not change for the sake of change, or even for the purpose of experiment. It is truth, and truth only. There are few interests of earth and time in which I feel so deep a concern, as in the causes, the remedy, and the prevention of the prevailing pauperism of the world; and there are few subjects, if indeed there be one, for increasing light upon which I should feel so much gratitude and happiness, as upon this. If I have taken narrow views, and have been led to erroneous conclusions upon it, no one will rejoice more than I shall in an exposure of my errors, and the prevention of any evil consequences which might have resulted from them.

There is, however, another view of poor-laws, which deserves far more attention than has been given to it. I have referred to this view, in speaking of them as direct and authoritative encroachments upon the peculiar prerogative of God, — *the direct inculcation of moral duties upon men.* Here, indeed, I may be met by the advocate of these laws with the reply, that although they have been so called, they are not, in truth, 'a compulsion of charity,' or a legal requisition of charity; that, in strictness of speech, however they may have been designated, they do not touch the moral law of charity, and have nothing to do with it. They are, on the contrary, to be viewed only as provisions at once for that *protection* which the law owes to the poor, in their exposures to neglect, and oppression and misery; and, to *those* who are not poor, for defence against the dangers *to which* society would otherwise be exposed from an

overwhelming pauperism. My answer is, that in requiring assessments for the poor, the law has expressly and repeatedly required them, as '*charitable alms.*' It has therefore certainly intended to enforce charity. I have no doubt that the protection of society has also been one of the objects of poor laws. But, does any one believe that the protection of the poor was ever thought of in framing these laws? This is entirely a modern, and a very recent explanation of their design. Nor is this all. I take the ground, that provisions for the supply of the necessities of the poor are the proper objects, not of legal enactments, but of the moral law of charity. Such provisions ought to be *charities*, in the strictest sense of the term. Our religion is not more full, or more distinct, on any subject than on this; and the argument against poor laws, in this single view of them, is, to my mind, entirely satisfactory. *They set aside the charity of religion, and substitute for it something which is not charity.* Nor is this the only encroachment which law has made upon moral rights, and moral duties. In establishing a religion for the State, it has, in every instance of this daring, substituted for christianity something very different from the simplicity and freedom of the gospel. Law has never interfered even for the regulation of wages, or of industry or enterprise in any of their departments, without extending injury to a far greater number than it has been able to benefit. Above all will this be the result, when it assumes to enforce moral obligations. And provisions for the poor are, I repeat, the appropriate work of charity. So God intended that they should be. And never will they be sufficient, or what they should be, or conduce to God's purposes concerning them, till they are made exclusively the work of an enlightened christian charity.

This topic is so important, that I beg to say a few more words upon it.

It certainly would be a wise principle in legislation, never to attempt the attainment of moral objects by law, till it shall have been proved that moral means are insufficient for their attainment; and, even then, that such objects should be made the aim of law, not by assuming the power of enforcing moral obligation, but by removing, as far as they are within the fair scope of law, the impediments which are in the way of a free moral action in society ; the outward and visible facilities and excitements to evil. In this way, Legislatures, for example, may do much for the cause of temperance. They may impose heavy excise duties, and require heavy costs for licenses to sell ardent spirits. They may also not only imprison the drunkard, making no distinction between the rich and the poor ; but may give his property, if he have any, to trustees or to guardians, for his own support and that of his family. But, even while thousands are dying the victims of lawless appetites, it is not the province of law *to command temperance*, or, to prescribe to men what, or when, or how much they shall eat or drink. The law, too, may and should extend protection to all, whenever they may require it, in the quiet exercise and enjoyment of their religious rights. But it may not require that men should read the Bible, or pray at home, or go to church on Sunday, or on any other day. It may also, and it should, inflict exemplary punishment upon the profligate, the gambler, and the dishonest ; for these are violators of the rights, disturbers of the peace, and to the extent of their influence, destroyers of the order and security of society. But if it should take into its keeping and

direction God's laws respecting moral purity, and industry, and honesty, it could communicate no salutary impulse to these laws; and, it would certainly lead to their very great perversion. And, in regard to charity, the law may be a very efficient instrument; for, it may do much for the remedy and the prevention of pauperism. It may act with a great and rightful power for these objects, by the means to which I have already adverted. And, in addition to these, it may give authority to Overseers of the poor to retain in their charge and service any able-bodied recipient of their aid, or support, till, by his labors he has remunerated them, or the institution in which he has been aided, for the expense incurred for him. A law to this effect would be justified by the principle, that if a man refuse to pay a just debt, he violates one of the elementary principles of civil society; of the laws of property; and may therefore be constrained to pay it. It may also establish Houses of Reformation for juvenile offenders, and thus save society from their depredations, and many hundreds of them from poverty and crime. It may make its prisons, through the solitary confinement of their inmates, and its wise and humane provisions for moral discipline, for useful instruction, and for generous excitement, to be schools of reformation. And it may extend all that protection equally to all the rights and interests of the poorest, which may be fairly claimed and enjoyed by the most opulent; and thus enlist the sympathies of the poor in the cause of law, and justice, and order, and the common weal. But it cannot authoritatively require charity, or prescribe the manner or amount of almsgiving, without encroaching on a moral principle, to the action, or even to the very life of which, freedom is as es-

sential a requisite as is air to the continuance of human existence. It cannot prescribe the manner and amount of almsgiving, without substituting a principle for charity, which will be even far more liable to the greatest abuses, than is charity, amidst all the selfishness of the world, to be insufficient for the occasions which require its exercise. This is a fact, which, I think, is very clearly demonstrated by the history of all legal interpositions for the support of the poor. These interpositions have commenced in seasons which, it was thought, peculiarly demanded them; that is, in seasons which called for extraordinary efforts for the relief of the poor. But, in such seasons, what has been the resort in Scotland? There, these exigencies have been left to the free judgment of those who were to meet, and to provide for them; and measures have been adopted, which were confined in their operation to the time for which they were required. But in England, fettered as it has been by legal requisitions in regard to the poor, the resort, in similar exigencies, has been to the law in the case; and, if no fair use could be made of it, recourse was had to an abuse of the law. This is the natural operation of the systems of the two countries for the relief of the poor. An extraordinary demand for this relief calls forth, in one, an extraordinary exercise of actual charity; and, not only of individual, but of social charity. When these exigencies occur there, the landed proprietors meet for the purpose of affording the relief required; and they afford it by a voluntary assessment. Or, the Parish Sessions may give the relief which the necessities of the case demand. This relief, however, is continued no longer than the exigency which called for it. On the other hand, the abuses of the poor-laws in

England, of which so much is said, and which are traced to the scarcity which began in 1795, have continued to this day, are sanctioned by usage, and, till the occurrence of a few late acts of resistance to them, threatened to become as essentially a part of the system, as if the law had incorporated them with it. This is a fact full of solemn admonition, and should not be lightly regarded by us.*

* In Mundell's 'Comparative View of the Industrial Situation of Great Britain from the year 1795 to the present time,' the author, in speaking of the act of the 43d of Elizabeth, says, 'The Legislature here made a great mistake, in attempting to enforce a moral obligation, which rests upon a far higher sanction. *This obligation has never been found to fail in the parishes of Scotland, where no compulsory provision has been introduced.* Mr. Duncan, a clergyman of the Church of Scotland, says, "the poor," in his parish, "are principally supported by their own relations. There is that feeling, in Scotland, of independence, that laudable desire among the poor to provide for themselves, and that dislike of anything approaching to charity, that the laboring classes in those quarters in which poor-rates have not been introduced, universally consider it their duty to make every sacrifice to support their poor relations." Whenever this moral obligation has been interfered with in Scotland, it has been found to be prejudicial. A committee of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, in a report made to a select committee of the House of Commons upon the poor-laws, in 1817, say, "It is clear to the committee, that, in almost all the parishes that have come under their notice, where a regular assessment has been established, the wants of the poor, and the extent of the assessments, have regularly and progressively increased from the commencement. And it does appear to be a matter for very serious interest to the community at large, to prevent, as far as possible, this practice from being adopted; to limit the assessments as much as they can be limited, where the circumstances of particular parishes render them unavoidable; and, wherever it is *practicable, to* abandon them." ' pp. 101, 102.

'*A fund is raised* in every parish in Scotland by voluntary co

Our Commonwealth, almost from the very date of its foundation, has been under the influence of poor laws. Our fathers came here with all their prepossessions strong in favor of laws for the support of the poor. They had lived under the operation of such laws in the parent country. One of the very first enactments, therefore, of the Court of the Colony and Province of Massachusetts Bay, had for its object, 'to determine all difference about the *lawful settling, and providing for, poor persons;*' and the extraordinary power was given to 'any Shire Court, or any two magistrates out of Court, to dispose of all unsettled persons into such towns as they shall judge to be most fit for the maintenance, and employment of such persons, and families, *for the ease of this county.*' Here, then, is the origin of all that litigation, which, from the beginning, has disturbed the peace of our towns, upon the question of the settlement of the poor; — a litigation, the least evil of which has been, and is, the not unfrequent expendi-

lections at the kirk door, and devoted to charitable uses. This fund is administered by the "Kirk Session," a body composed of the ministers and elders of the parish. When a year of extraordinary pressure occurs, and the fund proves insufficient for its purposes, the heritors, or landholders of the parish, hold a meeting, at which they fix for themselves a rate of contribution to make up the deficiency.'— *Edinburgh Review, No.* 55.

'No country in Europe has followed the example of England in the institution of poor laws.' 'On the continent of Europe, the public institutions afford protection only against infirmity, and extreme penury. Even Holland, so noted for its hospitals and charities, has not a poor-rate on the comprehensive plan of England.'

See Mr Meredith's report to the House of Representatives in Pennsylvania, on the operation of the poor laws, 1825. And Lowe's *Present state of* England. p. 189.

ture of twice the amount of money, which would be required to support him, or her, who is the object of the contention. Let the Overseers of the poor in the towns of our Commonwealth be consulted upon this subject, and great numbers of them, as well from their own experience, as their observation, will acknowledge this evil to be a great one. It is a contention, — respecting what? The legal duty of a town in regard to the relief, or support of a fellow being, to whom it has been found necessary to give relief, or support. A poor individual, or a poor family has asked for, and has received assistance, from an Overseer of the poor. And it is not improbable that relief may have so been asked, from the very circumstance that the Overseers are legally required to give it. It is believed, however, that he, or they, have a habitancy in another town in the Commonwealth. Notice is therefore sent to this town, that the individual, or family so aided must be removed; and that, till this removal is effected, all expenses incurred for the sufferer, or sufferers, will be charged to the town to which he, or they, are so supposed to belong. Is the asserted habitancy denied? The resort is 'to the law;' and the question is argued as a mere legal and pecuniary one. So, indeed, it must of necessity be. If the support required by the poor individual, or family, was regarded only as a concern of humanity and charity, no argument could be held upon it in our Courts. Presented in this form, it would be dismissed at once as a purely moral question, to be settled by moral considerations and principles. And as a merely legal and pecuniary question, the decision of which must rest upon the facts which go to prove, or to disprove,

the asserted and denied habitancy, the purely moral considerations and principles of the case are set aside in the minds of the litigants, equally as in those of the lawyers whom they employ as the supporters of their cause. It is a contest in law between towns, — not to settle a principle, the settlement of which will prevent future differences in regard to the poor, but, simply for a recovery on the one hand, and for an exemption from payment on the other, of an expense which has been incurred by a town for the relief, or support of some person, or family, which it is denied has a legal habitancy in it. Can such contests be maintained without a great sacrifice of true charity ? Is not the cost, and the loss, of moral and kindly feeling, which are incurred in these contests, incomparably a more serious consideration, do they not bring with them an incomparably greater evil to our towns, than would be the pecuniary cost of supporting those who are the objects of such contentions ?

Again. The very law which requires the support of the poor, of course invests the poor with A LEGAL RIGHT to this support. It thus creates a new, and supplemental right, additional to the natural and moral rights which were antecedent to it. And why is this ? Is the natural right of man denied, or indeed the right of any living being, to that which is indispensable to his subsistence ? 'Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry.' (Prov. 6. 20.) Or is the moral right, the right which is founded in the exposures and sufferings of our common nature, and in our relation as fellow beings, and I will add, even in conscience, the highest principle of our nature, — is *this right* too undefineable, or too feeble, for the security of a provision for the poor ? However this may be,

the fact is unquestionable, that the right thus conferred by law is fully understood. There is here no obscurity. This right, too, is as strong as it is well defined. I do not mean that every Overseer of the poor must, and does, give to every applicant for public alms. But I mean, that the applicants for public alms are greatly increased in numbers, by the knowledge of this right to alms when they think that they have need of them. I am quite accustomed to hear the expressions, 'there is a provision made for the poor, and I have a right to it as well as others.' The right, in common cases of our home poor, may not often be openly asserted, when alms are sought of the Overseers of the poor. And yet I doubt not that they will bear me witness, that the assertion of it, even in these cases, is not an unheard of occurrence among them. It would be strange, indeed, if the knowledge of such a provision required by law, should fail to create applicants for it. The provision is virtually a fund created by the law, of which those who understand the law, and who had rather live upon the earnings of others, than by their own industry, will seek their share; not however as a charity, but as a legally allotted portion of the common stock. Nor is it to be doubted that a share of this stock is sought, and obtained by many, who, if there had been no poor laws among us, would never have asked for charity.

These, however, are not the greatest of the evils of our legal system of provision for the poor. The order of 'the Court of the Colony and Province of Massachusetts Bay,' to which I have referred, 'for determining differences about the lawful settling and providing for poor persons,' has its date in 1639. But the *principle having* been adopted, that legal interference

was necessary to secure the exercise of the common rights of humanity toward the suffering poor, and a most arbitrary law having been passed for fixing settlements, it is not strange that the occurrence of an unforseen exigency, bearing directly upon the operation of the principle thus assumed, and of the measures taken to carry it through, should have been interpreted as a call to new legislative provisions upon the subject. Such an exigency occurred in 1675. "This court," it was then said, '*considering the inconvenience and damage which may arise to particular towns, by such as being forced from their habitations by the present calamity of the war, do repair unto them for succor*, do order and declare, that such persons, being inhabitants of this jurisdiction, who are so forced from their habitations, and repair to other plantations for their relief, shall not, by virtue of their residence in such plantations they repair unto, be accounted, or respected inhabitants thereof, or *imposed upon them according to law.* But *in such case, and where necessity requires, by reason of inability of relations, &c., they shall be paid out of the public treasury.*" The question arises, supposing there had been no poor laws previous to 1675, whether even the difficulties of this exigency would have been thought a call for legal interference? Had our ancestors never before enacted laws for the support of the poor, and, especially, if they had not brought with them the spirit of legal provision for this object from England, I do not believe that 'the difficulty and damage,' which it was apprehended, 'might arise to particular towns, by such as, being forced from their habitations by the calamity of the war, repaired unto such towns for succor,' would have been felt by these towns to have de-

manded legislative aid from the Public Treasury. The call was loud indeed, and imperative upon these towns, for extraordinary exertions. And had there been no poor-laws, free social charity might have received a strong excitement in behalf of the sufferers referred to, not only in the places where they were, but in other towns than those in which the destitute sought for temporary security and support. Nor can I have a doubt that the sympathy and humanity of those who were able to defend, and provide for their brethren thus 'forced from their habitations,' would have been sufficient for the exigency, great as it might have been. But, the fact is, and it is not to be forgotten, that social charity had hardly known a day of freedom within the limits of 'the Colony and Province of Massachusetts Bay.' It had been bound in fetters at its very birth, and was now so crippled that it was thought at least that it could not go alone. Or, it had not been trusted, and it was therefore thought that it could not be trusted. The Legislature had taken it into its charge, and the people therefore thought that it was the proper charge of the Legislature. Here were the chief difficulties of the case. Government had undertaken to say who should, and who should not, be supported by towns. The consequence was, that towns had not only learned to measure their obligations to charity by the ordinances of government, but to look also to government for relief, either when they felt, or feared, the weight of a more than ordinary burden. It was in this exigency that recourse was had, for the first time in our annals, to the Public Treasury for the support of the poor. I *am almost tempted* to say, would that our fathers could *but for a moment* have foreseen the effects of this p

cedent! The waste of money, indeed, I account as nothing, though it has been very great, compared with the pauperism, and the waste of virtue and happiness, to which it has ministered.

Suppose, then, that our poor laws should be abolished. This is a measure which is thought by some to be fraught even with far greater dangers, than are any with which these laws may threaten us. 'Repeal these laws,' it will be said, 'and thousands of beggars, now aided or supported by our Overseers, will at once be thrown upon the community. Repeal our poor laws, and, unharmed as may be many of our small towns, the large ones, and especially upon the sea-board, will be exposed to an inundation of poverty, from which we should soon find it necessary to pray that Legislative interposition may again be granted for our protection.' I reply, that I have no fear of this result. I have no fear that a repeal of our poor laws would leave the poor in any town in the Commonwealth exclusively to a dependence on private charity, provided that other means than private charity should be required for the charge of them. There might be, and I think there would be towns, in which, within a short time, it would be found no longer necessary to have annual assessments for the poor; because there would be found in them, as there are in many towns in Scotland, no greater number requiring charity, than could easily, and willingly, be taken in charge by private benevolence. But exigencies would probably occur even in these towns, which would require extraordinary efforts and measures effectually to meet them. And in our large towns, extraordinary efforts and measures might immediately be demanded. But for what? To aid and sup-

port all who have hitherto been supported? No. It is the facility with which this provision has been obtained, by many of the idle and able bodied, who will never work, while they can live without work, and by the intemperate and improvident, who might support themselves in the time when there is no demand for their labor, were they to spare and save as they well might while they are every day finding employment, which has occasioned a great extent of the expenditures that have been incurred for the poor. It is a matter of course, that, as long as individuals of this description have only to demand public support to obtain it, the necessity of labor in one case, and of providence and economy in the other, will be unfelt. I would even say, let the law make the amount of its allowance as small as it may, and prescribe the manner in which this allowance shall be given with as many restrictions as it may, the simple fact of an appropriation for this object by law confers a legal right, and justifies a legal claim to it. And how shall the right, or the claim, be limited in practice, where the ground of either cannot be contested by those to whom application for the provision is made? Let the difficulties of the case, then, be as great as they may, which would be consequent upon a repeal of our poor laws, the proposition of a return to these laws would at best offer but a choice of very great difficulties. It would at best be the proposition of a measure which would be as sure to produce an ultimate increase of the evil, as it would be to bring a temporary relief from it. The questions, then, are to be fairly and fearlessly met, are there no better provisions to be made for the poor, than any which are within the scope of law? Are not the claims of justice and of humanity to be fully answered, while at the same time the measures

avoided by which pauperism in its worst forms, and sin and misery are extended? In other words, should all legal provision for the poor be abolished, how are the poor to be provided for? I hardly know whence a greater amount of moral good could be looked for to our community, or our State, or, at least, whence a rescue could be obtained from a greater amount of moral evil, than from an interest, as strong, and as prevalent as should be felt, in this inquiry.

Do you ask, then, what answer I would give to this last inquiry? In reply, I must ask, from whence has come upon us this extent of poverty? Who are these multitudes of the poor? Are the causes of the condition in which we find them unintelligible? Or, where these causes may be understood, are they wholly beyond our control? Is this whole multitude in some way to be supported by alms? May we not cleanse, or dry up, some of the springs of this evil which threaten us as with an inundation? Let us pause at these questions. Look at this amount of the poor *en masse*, which is thus to be thrown upon the community, and the difficulty of provision for them without legislative requisitions, aye, and without legislative allowances for their support, may seem to be insuperable. But separate, and classify them, and light will break in upon the questions of duty, and of interest in regard to them. Who, then, I ask again, are these poor? What are their just claims? And what are the rights and duties of society respecting them?

In answer to the question, who are these poor? I would divide them into five classes. First: The idle, *intemperate*, and improvident, who, but for their idleness, intemperance, and improvidence, might support

themselves by their own labors. Second: The permanently poor, who are broken in constitution and health by the viciousness of their lives, and are capable of little or no service by which they may minister to their own subsistence. Third: The permanently virtuous poor, who, by reason of disease, debility, or old age, are to be permanently supported. Fourth: The temporarily and occasionally poor, who are doing what they can for self-support; but who need, especially in winter, and during a time of sickness, occasional and temporary aid. And, fifth: The orphan, or deserted, or neglected and morally exposed, or actually vicious children of these classes of the poor. Each of these classes, I think, has strong claims, which imply duties on the part of society towards them. But society has also corresponding claims and rights respecting them. Let us then be just in our judgments of their claims and rights, as well as of our own. Nay, we cannot correctly estimate our own claims and rights, or conceive justly of our duties in the case, while we deny, or think lightly of, the just claims which they have upon us. If society have caused, — and who can doubt whether it have caused? — a great amount of this poverty and vice, it is so far responsible for it, and should provide for it. But it should so provide for it, as at the same time to prevent its continuance. It should provide for it on the broad basis of the inalienable rights of humanity; of christian brotherhood; and of the obligations of the stewards of the manifold gifts of God that they be found faithful.

What, then, are the fair rights and claims of the first *class, and what* are the rights and duties of society in *regard to them?*

'The distinction,' says the report of the Commissioners on the pauper laws, 'is a broad one, and should never be lost sight of, between the idle beggar, and the impotent poor. For while the duty, in regard to the latter, is most plain, and enforced alike by the principles of religion and humanity, that they are to be supported by those who have the means and opportunity of supporting them, it is equally clear that the able-bodied and the idle have no claim to support from a tax upon the capacity, and the property of the industrious.' This is true. But it is neither all the truth, nor the most important truth upon this subject. For who, I again ask, are these idle and able-bodied, these intemperate and improvident claimants of alms? Some of them, indeed, were reared under advantages, from which a better condition and character might have been hoped for. But they had not moral strength to resist strong temptations to early vicious indulgence, surrounded as they were with facilities and excitements to this indulgence, which, even if they were not in all cases, in some at least were authorized by law; and in all were sanctioned by the approbation, or were either winked at, or unheeded by the policy, or the negligence, of society around them. A very great proportion, however, of these degraded fellow beings drew their first breath in the abodes of poverty; were reared amidst improvidence and intemperance; had few or no advantages during their childhood for religious, or any other useful instruction; and in the most susceptible season of life were exposed to all the influences which can corrupt *the mind* in all its springs of thought, and disposition, *and conduct.* When I see, as every week I see, the *number of* children who are growing up even in our City

of Schools, under the full action of all the circumstances which can vitiate the body, and deprave the soul; without any regular employment, and uncared for whether they are idle, or employed; very early as familiar with the language of profaneness, and as flippant in the use of it, as even a systematic education in it could have rendered them; already having acquired a love of ardent spirits, and being accustomed to obtain them when, and as they can; when I see these children, now wandering about with no other object than that of wearing away the time, and now engaged in petty gambling, or in some other and equally reckless indulgence; wholly uncontrolled at home, and only checked abroad, and kept from outrage, by their fear of its consequences; and when I think of the number of children similarly exposed in all our great towns, and in many of our small ones; when I am told of between ten and twelve thousand children in the city of New York, between the ages of five and fifteen years, and of two hundred and fifty thousand, between the same ages, in the State of Pennsylvania, who are not in any school; and when I think of the many hundreds of thousands in England, in Ireland, and on the continent of Europe, entering upon life, and passing its first fifteen or twenty years amidst moral dangers, of which no one speaks to them a warning word, and in the formation of habits as vicious and corrupting as they well can be; — truly I am surprised. But at what? Not that there is so much idleness, and intemperance, and improvidence, so much abjectness, and beggary, and vice among those who have physical strength for their own support. My surprise is, that there are not more, and more terrible outbreakings of the worst passions; that there is not more out-

rageous vice than we actually see among them. My surprise is, that so many of them are brought to do what they honestly may do for their own subsistence; and, that they are not more frequently asking for what they need, or taking it unasked. Where, then, rests accountableness for their poverty, their character, their moral exposures, and the exposures of society through their lawless wants, and equally lawless dispositions and habits? A tremendous responsibility, in these respects, it seems to me lies upon the society around the poor of this class; for the causes of the degradation of these unhappy fellow beings are within the control of the society around them. The causes of this poverty are moral; and three fourths of it may be prevented by the moral agencies, which it has pleased God to place within the power of those, who form and guide the opinions, and decree and establish the usages of society. Is it asked, what are these moral preventives? I will give my own views of them as briefly as I can.*

I would say, then, that the most important of all means for the rescue of those who are most exposed to fall into

* How can it be, that pauperism should not extend in our city, while 700 places are licensed in it for the sale of ardent spirits; while a quart of these spirits may be obtained for ten cents, — a smaller sum than may be earned by the lowest laborer in an hour; and while multitudes, under the excitement and gratification thus given to their vitiated appetites, are only more happy in the indulgence of these appetites, than they are in bringing others to the level of their own debasement? Let us be instructed by the facts which are daily calling for attention to this subject. The question of the causes and remedy of pauperism is intimately connected with the cause of liberty, order, virtue and happiness, through the generations that are to follow us. Let us be faithful to our interests and our duties in regard to it, and God will not fail to follow our efforts with his blessing.

this class of the poor, and for the security of society from the evils which are experienced, or are feared from them, is an active and prevalent sensibility in society to the true causes of their degradation ; an active and prevalent sentiment in society, of the nearness of the relation, and of the identity of the interests, of all its classes and its members ; and a corresponding feeling of obligation in every one, first, in no way to contribute to the production, or the maintenance of the causes of debasement and misery among his fellow creatures ; and, secondly, in every way, as he has the means and opportunity, to favor and support the measures, which, under such circumstances, he shall believe to be for the greatest good of the whole, and of every member of the community. Let this sensibility, this sentiment, and this feeling of obligation be what they should be, and what christianity intends that they shall be, in those who profess to receive it, and distilleries, and dram-shops, and brothels, and gambling-houses, will not be found the formidable obstacles which they now are in the way of the reformation, and salvation of hundreds of thousands of our fellow beings from sin, and ruin, and wretchedness. I thank God that there is an increasing sensibility to the causes of the greatest, and of the most general suffering among us. But it is yet small compared with what it should be. And feeble, too, is the sentiment of the relation of men to each other, as the immortal children of the infinite Father ; and, consequently, of the identity of their immediate, through that of their eternal interests. Oh, when will this sentiment become the life-spring of the connexion and intercourse of man with man! We hear much of the mighty power of public opinion. And, in truth, it has done, and is doing much for the demolition of old, w

apparently impregnable institutions; for the advancement of religious and civil freedom; for the abolition of slavery; for the suppression and prevention of intemperance; and for other great concerns of humanity. More, indeed, in these respects, has been achieved within the last fifty years, and through this very agency, than was accomplished by the labors of the preceding fifteen centuries. But the power which christianity would give to it, and the uses which christianity would make of it, are, I think, yet very partially, and to a very limited extent, comprehended. Let it be brought under the guidance of the instructions of Jesus Christ, as far only as his religion is professedly received, and embued with the spirit which Christian principles would impart to it, and there are no objects to which an enlightened christian benevolence can prompt, which an enlightened christian opinion will not be able to accomplish. Let every one, then, who acknowledges the truth of christianity, be faithful to the obligations which it imposes on him. Something may be done, by means short of these, to check the progress of abject pauperism and crime. But by no other means can all the good which God has placed within our power be attained or accomplished.

But the difficulty will still recur, 'we must take the world as it is.' Be it so. The question then presents itself, suppose our poor-laws to be abolished, what immediate measures must be taken to meet the exigency?

In the first place, I would reply, that *for the idle and able-bodied, the intemperate and improvident, who apply for alms, work, or the opportunity to work, should be provided.* I know it will be said, that however easy it

may be found to propose this plan, it will not be found very easy of execution. Perhaps not. But is it therefore wholly impracticable? It would, indeed, be very difficult of execution, if an equal number with that of those who now make up this class of applicants for alms was continually, or even for a very long time, thus to be provided for. But suppose that our municipal authorities should advertise in all our newspapers, and even send the information from house to house, for a year, that half the average wages given to laborers who find for themselves sufficient employment, will be given by the city to the laborers who ask for alms because they cannot find employment, for each good day's work that shall be done by them in digging earth, and wheeling it on the city's lands, in the places which it is very desirable should be so improved, how much land would thus probably be brought into a state for the erection upon it of habitations for man? I do not believe that many acres would thus be added to the city. But I do believe that, by this expedient, much might be done to check the spirit of beggary, and to excite many who are now willing to live by beggary to useful industry. For a short time, I have no doubt, in case of a repeal of our poor-laws, this class of the claimants of alms, in some of our towns, would be large; and, for a long time, — at least as long as every conceivable excitement to intemperance is left in their way, — there will be a sufficient number of them to call for the very serious attention of the Overseers of the poor, and of the public. For this class of the poor I would not therefore wholly rely on this expedient. I would proceed a step further, and *provide for them* well organized Work-houses.

*This measure* is recommended in the Report of the

Commissioners. But it is there proposed only as a measure for 'the protection of the industrious and the thrifty, against the demands and incursions of the idle and able-bodied.' It is therefore there recommended only on the ground of the claims of society against this class of the poor. But it ought to have been distinctly stated, and should be distinctly understood, that the claim for these establishments is quite equal on the part of those who are to be sent to them. Work-houses, and even prisons, will assume a new character, and be regarded with new associations and sentiments by society, when it shall be fully comprehended to what an extent it is the *misfortune*, as well as the vice of the inmates of these institutions, by which they are brought to them. I have referred to the circumstances by which great numbers are brought into this class of the poor, and I will not here dwell upon them. I say only, that if society have a right to demand protection from them,—and I admit this right, — they, too, have some corresponding claims upon the sympathy of society. I do not say that they have a claim to alms, as such; for, in proportion as a reliance is had simply on alms for their relief, the very means of relief are also means of confirming and extending the evil. This reliance has indeed done very much to extend, and to perpetuate the evil. But it still may be a noble charity to found a Workhouse, which, while it gives support, and requires compensation for it from him who shall receive it, at the same time confers, with the support so given, the unspeakably greater good of that moral instruction and discipline, which shall call forth new and better dispositions than were ever before possessed, and do what can be done for the formation and establishment of a better charac-

ter. Let Work-houses be established on these principles in the counties, or in smaller districts or departments of our Commonwealth, in which alone Overseers of the poor shall be authorised to give aid to those who have physical power for self-support; and, let the Legislature give the power, if it be not already possessed, to compel the inmates of these institutions to so much labor as would at least have earned their entire support if they had been laboring abroad. To my mind, there would be nothing unjust, or unkind, in either of these measures; and should even very many, who might be so provided for, be unable to make a complete remuneration for the expenditures incurred for them, I cannot doubt that a great good would accrue both to the poor of this class, and to society, through these institutions. I cannot doubt that poverty, of the kind here referred to, to a considerable extent may thus be remedied; or that, to a still greater extent, its increase may thus be prevented.*

* The Work-house system, as it exists in England, is indeed as bad as could well be devised, and is as corruptly administered as the system of poor-rates. It is a fit part only of such a machinery as that to which it belongs, and could be retained only in such a connexion. When the Work-house system therefore is spoken of by English Political Economists, or Philanthropists, we are to understand that reference is had to Work-houses as they now exist in England. Two or three, or it may be half a dozen parishes unite to farm out their poor to the keeper of one of these establishments. The houses in which the poor are thus kept do not admit of the classification of their inmates, and a very depraving influence is constantly going on in them. Nay, in London at least, the inmates of these institutions are allowed to go out once and twice a week, to visit their friends; on which occasions they swell the number of *street beggars, and* are not distinguishable from them. — Nor have

The *second* class I have named consists of *the permanently poor, who are broken in constitution and health by the viciousness of their lives, and are capable of little or no service, by which they may minister to their own subsistence.* These, also, I would make the inmates of a *Work-house.* They are now, indeed, as they are seen abroad, and while living upon the miserable food which sustains them, and daily extending disease through their bodies, and corruption and misery through their minds, by the indulgence of their vitiated and lawless appetite for ardent spirits, often so much enfeebled, as to be able only to move about in search of sustenance, or of the stimulous which they feel to be more important for them than food. But in a well-regulated Work-house, to which they should be sent, or on their application received, as per-

we yet, in our own country, a Work-house as it should be. The best organized establishment of this kind which I have visited is that in Baltimore. There, a debt and credit account is opened with each inmate. Board, clothing and medical attendance, are charged to each; and as soon as any one is capable of work, work is required of him in payment of his debt. The principal employments in this establishment are, farming, weaving, shoe-making and tailoring. Seven cents a day are credited for work done; and he who leaves the institution without having received a regular discharge is held liable for the debt he has incurred in it; and if taken and returned, is punishable for a misdemeanor. — The average number per month in this institution last year was 434. The whole expense for the poor in it last year, was $13,956 45. The expense for out door poor, in the same year, was $1,814 25. Total, $15,770 70. The number of out door poor assisted by the Trustees for the poor was 117. — These sums are independent of expenditures for permanent improvements, and for interest upon the debt arising out of the purchase of the farm, which, if *added to the* above total, would make the whole expense to have *been $17,004 67.* The population of Baltimore is 80,000.

manent poor, to live and die there, many would regain the strength by which they could do something for their support; and, in truth, be a far less expense to society, than they are while living as they now live. The removal of the spectacle and example of such as these from the families in which they live, and the neighborhoods in which they are seen, would alone bring to these families and neighborhoods a moral good, which would richly repay the expense at which it must be purchased. This is a class of the poor which calls loudly for compassion. It contains some who have fallen from a condition of competency; and a greater number who have come into it from the first class which I have described of the poor, and who have descended, some more rapidly than others, and some further than others, into the gulf of utter darkness, and of total dependence, in which we find them. In a Work-house, organized upon the principles of an enlarged christian philanthropy, — by which I mean the principles at once of the greatest good to its inmates, and to society, — the poor of this class would recover some at least of the almost lost powers of their moral nature. Something, and perhaps much would be effected, in the work of their moral redemption. Without any encroachment upon their rights, government might give the power of continuing their confinement, in case of the recovery of their health, till they shall have made a suitable return, by their labors, for the care that has been taken of them. Government may thus at once act for the rich, in the protection of property; and for large numbers of the poor, in saving them from the greatest of their exposures and miseries.

*That the two* classes of the poor of which I have spoken *comprehend* a very large proportion of the depen-

dents upon public alms, we have the testimonies of the Superintendents of our Alms-houses. Of 499 inmates of our House of Industry, when it was visited by the agent of the Commissioners, three fourths, excluding idiots and the insane, were said to have been brought there by intemperance. Of 3,000 who have been admitted to the Salem Work-house, during the ten years in which it has been in the care of its present Superintendent, he thinks that 2,900 were brought there, directly or indirectly, by intemperance. Of 109 in the Marblehead Alms-house, 78 were brought there by the same cause. In Cambridge, three fourths of 104, and in Charlestown, the same proportion of 150, but for this cause, it is thought, would not have been in the Alms-house. And hardly is there a town in the Commonwealth, the statistics of whose poor have been taken, in which this is not considered as the principal cause of the most expensive poverty for which it has to make provision. Nor is this the strong conviction only of the Superintendents of our own Alms-houses. Say those of Columbia County, New York, 'Of all the persons sent to the Poor-house, more than half have been reduced to pauperism, directly or indirectly, by intemperance. The statute ought to provide directly, and not by implication, that the services of such persons shall be effectually under the control of those who have the support of their families, — the Overseers of the poor. The Poor-house system is daily becoming more popular, from satisfactory evidence of its bettering the condition of the poor, and vastly lessening the expense of their support.'— In this County, it is to be remembered, that *aid is given* by the Overseers only at the Poor-house.— *The Superintendents* in the County of Seneca 'do not

hesitate to say, that it is their firm belief that two thirds, if not three fourths of the pauperism of the County, arises from intemperance.' And, says the Superintendent of the Alms-house in the city of New York, in a letter dated 7th January, 1833, and addressed to the Secretary of State, 'The number of male adults at present in the house is 572, of which number there are not ten that can be called sober men. The number of female adults is 601, and I doubt whether there are fifty of them who can be called sober women. I consider the present pauper-laws as calculated to encourage intemperance, from the fact that habitual drunkards remain in the asylums which are provided for them *only during their pleasure. When they are ordered to work, many of them take their discharge. They soon become miserable objects about our streets, and are sent again to the Alms-house; and by the time they get well, again take their discharge. And so on from year to year. I believe that all persons whom the public support as habitual drunkards ought to be admitted to a Work-house for at least twelve months, where they could be compelled to earn their living. And when their term expires, if they take their discharge, and again become intemperate, commit them again for twelve months more, and so continue.*' I will only add, from the highly respectable Superintendent of our establishment for the poor at South Boston, that, 'when it was commenced, it was intended for the reception and employment of the able-bodied poor, who should claim the charity of the city. Hence it was called the *House of Industry. But it has no effectual means of detaining this class of the poor when they are disposed to escape from it. They go to it, therefore, only for temporary relief, when they are worn out by intemperance* and disease, and leave

The *fourth* class, that is, the class of those who are *temporarily and occasionally poor, who are doing what they can for self-support, but who need, and especially in the winter, and during a time of sickness, occasional and temporary aid, I would leave for the exercises of private charity.* There are some also of the immediately preceding class, whose characters and conditions will call forth that sympathy and interest, which will secure for them an adequate, an entirely comfortable support, in the homes which private charity will provide for them. So great, indeed, is the proportion of the idle, intemperate, and reckless dependents upon alms, that, if efficient measures should be taken for the care of these, I know not the claim of charity which our community would not most promptly and willingly answer. Many at least are our towns, in which there would not then be left a greater number requiring 'charitable alms,' than would be required to keep our sympathies with the poor in a happy and healthful exercise.

I have made a class also of the *orphan, the deserted, the neglected, and otherwise morally exposed children of the poor.* These, in large towns, form even a very large class of the fairest claimants of public sympathy and charity. Nothing can be more injudicious than it is to send children of this class to establishments, in which they are brought into a close connexion with adults, who have been brought to poverty by gross vices. Many of these children are innocent, and in our disposal of them, should be recognised as innocent. Many of them, however, require a very efficient moral discipline, which is hardly to be looked for but in an *institution* expressly established for their object. Such *an institution* is our House of Reformation. Such an

institution will be our Farm School. A due regard to the condition and claims of this class of children would be one of the most effectual of all means of preventing both poverty and crime.

I will only add, that I look for no great general good, in any of the departments of society, except from moral causes; and I look for the operation of moral causes only to an enlightened, and a free public sentiment. Much may be done for the poor, by a ministry which shall be exclusively devoted to their improvement and happiness. But this ministry will not be effectual to the good which might be accomplished by it, till it shall have the full aid and support of public sentiment. In proportion as the classes of society shall be aroused to a distinct perception, and a just estimate of moral interests, as incomparably the greatest of all interests, the means will be multiplied, in all classes, of the amelioration of human suffering, and of the greatest advancement of human happiness. It is not surprising that so many of the causes of pauperism, and of crime and wretchedness, have continued, and still continue to act almost unchecked, when it is considered how very little thought is given to these causes; how entirely attention, in most men, is absorbed by personal and selfish interests; how vague, even in many who would rise above these interests, is the sentiment of their relation either to God, or to their fellow beings; and, consequently, how feeble is the sentiment, that the life-spring of the purest happiness in every individual soul is that spirit of sympathy, and fraternity, which finds its own best good in the communication of good and happiness to them. I should *even welcome any* embarrassments, any immediate *pressure, even of* suffering, which would call forth a pre-

vailing christian sentiment in man towards his fellow man; a deep conviction and feeling of the truth, that the proper object of the highest concern of every individual, is his own moral good, and that of his fellow beings. By nothing short of this, I repeat, are the objects of christianity in our world attainable, as far as their attainment is connected with human agency. I should rejoice, therefore, in the repeal of all legal enactments for the support of the poor, if from no other cause, for the very reason that it would do something, and would, probably do much, to bring the question before the public at once as an individual, and a general concern, what is duty, and what is interest, in respect to the several classes of the poor? The sooner this question is so to be met, the better it will be both for society, and for the poor. Both duty and interest have, I think, been alike mistaken upon this great question; and the opposition and conflicts which have been supposed to exist between these principles, were but the oppositions and conflicts of interests directly opposed to christian duty. Let christian precepts be made our rule, and christian purposes our end, and there will be no clashing between them. Then will the rich be honored by the poor; and in turn, they will '*honor the poor*.' 'This sentiment of respect,' — I quote the words of one whom it is my happiness to call my friend, — 'is essential to an improving connexion between the more and less prospered conditions of society. This alone makes beneficence truly Godlike. Without it, alms-giving degrades the receiver. We must learn how slight and shadowy are the distinctions between us and the poor; and that the last in outward distinctions may be the first in the *best attributes* of humanity. A fraternal union, founded

on this deep conviction, and intended to lift up the exposed and tempted poor, is to do infinitely more for that suffering class, than all our artificial associations; and, till Christianity shall have breathed into us this spirit of respect for our nature, wherever it is found, we shall do them little good. I conceive that in the present low state of christian virtue, we little apprehend the power which might be exerted over the fallen and destitute, by a benevolence which should truly, thoroughly recognise in them the image of God. Perhaps none of us have yet heard, or can comprehend the tone of voice, in which a man, thoroughly impressed with this sentiment, would speak to a fellow creature. It is a language hardly known on earth; and no eloquence, I believe, has achieved such wonders as it is destined to accomplish.'*

Respectfully,

JOSEPH TUCKERMAN.

*Boston, May 5th*, 1833.

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P. S. I have not been taken from my service by any severe sickness during the last six months; and each month has brought to me increased evidence of the importance of this ministry. The connexions which are formed in it are favorable to the daily exertion of a very important moral influence, in cases which are hardly to be reached by any other institution; and I am more and more persuaded, if suitable instruments for the work can be obtained, that by no means can the well being of cities be more effectually advanced, than through the operations of this ministry. I am very happy in being able to inform you, that our friends in New York have invited Mr Arnold to take the office of a minister at large there; and I believe that he will at once enter upon

* Channing's Discourses, p. 165.

its duties. May our heavenly Father crown his service with the choicest blessings! Within the past six months, I have received very efficient aid from my coadjutor and friend, Mr C. F. Barnard. He has taken the entire charge of the services of the Chapel, and has devoted himself to his work with unremitted fidelity. The next report to you of this ministry will probably be made by him.

J. T.

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OF

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JULY, 1833.

*Price* 6 Cents.

# EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY.

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THE American Unitarian Association celebrated its eighth anniversary on the evening of Tuesday, May 28, 1833. The members met for the transaction of business at half past six o'clock, in the Berry-street Vestry, Dr Bancroft, the President, in the chair.

The records of the last annual meeting were read. The Treasurer presented the following Statement of Receipts and Expenditures, which was accepted.

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BOSTON, MAY 28, 1832.

To the Executive Committee of the American Unitarian Association.

GENTLEMEN — Herewith you have my Annual Account as Treasurer of the American Unitarian Association, and a statement of the Receipts and Expenditures from May 29, 1832, to this date.

The balance in the Treasury is $1099,90, of which sum 45,06 belongs to the Domestic Mission fund, and the remainder to the funds of the Association.

Respectfully yours, &c.

HENRY RICE.

## Statement of Receipts and Expenditures of the American Unitarian Association from May 29, 1832, to May 28, 1833.

### RECEIPTS.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Balance in the Treasury May 29, 1832, - - | | 449 71 |
| From Annual Subscribers - - - | 97 25 | |
| " 10 Life " - - - - - | 300 | |
| " Auxiliary Societies, - - - | 2111 95 | |
| Donations, - - - - - - - | 63 | |
| Sales of Tracts, - - - - - - | 751 39 | |
| From several Unitarian Societies for the support of a Domestic Missionary in Boston, - - - - - - - | 844* | |
| Interest allowed by the Treasurer, - | 54 31 | |
| | | 4221 90 |
| | | $4671 61 |

### EXPENDITURES.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Donation to Unitarian Society in Buffalo, | 50 | |
| Paid Rev. D. Huntington for Missionary services in State of New York - - | 25 | |
| " Rev. E. L. Bascom for Missionary services in Savannah Georgia, - - | 75 | |
| Carried over | | $150 |

* This amount was thus obtained;

| | |
|---|---|
| From the Ladies of Federal Street Church, - | $194 |
| " " New South " - - | 164 |
| " " Brattle Street " - - | 101 50 |
| " " West " - - | 91 |
| " " Twelfth Congregational - - | 50 |
| " " Purchase Street " - - | 48 50 |
| " " Chauncy Place " - - | 45 |
| *Subscriptions* for 1832, which were received too late to *appear in the* last Report - - - - - | 150 |
| | 844 00 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Brought over | | $150 |
| Paid for Paper, and printing and binding Tracts, - - - - - | 2054 45 | |
| " Incidental Expenses, as per account current, - - - - - - | 67 26 | |
| " Domestic Secretary for the Expenses of his office, - - - - - - | 100 | |
| " Charles Bowen one year's salary as general Agent, - - - - - | 300 | |
| " Rev. J. Tuckerman one year's salary, as Domestic Missionary, - - | 700 | |
| " Rev. C. F. Barnard, six months salary, as assistant, &c., - - - | 200 | |
| | | 3,571 71 |
| Balance, | | $1099 90 |

HENRY RICE, *Treasurer.*

*Boston, May* 28, 1833.

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BOSTON, MAY 28, 1833. The subscribers have examined the accounts of Henry Rice, Treasurer of the American Unitarian Association, and find them correct, the balance on hand this day being ten hundred and ninetynine dollars and ninety cents.

(*Signed*) JOHN WILLIAMS, JOHN CLARK. } *Auditors.*

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The subject of the General Agency claiming the attention of the Association, it was voted, that the choice of Officers be deferred till Thursday evening, and that when the Association adjourn, it adjourn to meet at that time.

*The following* correspondence was read.

BOSTON, MAY 23, 1833.

To the REV. EZRA STILES GANNETT.

DEAR SIR,—I have the honor to communicate to you the following copy from the records of the American Unitarian Association: —

'An adjourned meeting of the American Unitarian Association was held on Thursday evening, May 31, 1832.'

'After a full discussion of the expediency of adopting measures for the appointment of a General Agent of the Association, it was *voted* to proceed immediately to the choice; and on counting the votes, Rev. Ezra S. Gannett was found to be unanimously elected.'

'The Executive Committee, with Messrs N. A. Barrett, George B. Emerson, and Benjamin Seaver, were appointed to make arrangements and provide means for carrying on the Agency.'

In furnishing you with these documents, it seems proper to state, that this official act has been delayed till now, chiefly from the wish that the Agent elect, previously to his being requested to make up and communicate his decision, might know the degree of success which would attend the efforts of the abovementioned Committee, in performing the duties assigned them by the Association. This success, it affords me great pleasure to be able at length to say, has been such as to warrant the Association in offering their Agent an annual compensation for his services that will be perfectly satisfactory, and at the same time to assure him of the very general sympathy and coöperation of the Unitarian community.

With true regard, your friend and servant,

SAMUEL BARRETT.

*Dom. Secretary pro tem. of the A. U. A.*

BOSTON, MAY 25, 1833.

REV. SAMUEL BARRETT, Secretary pro tem.
of the American Unitarian Association.

DEAR SIR,—The circumstances that necessarily delayed the official communication with which I was honored through your letter of yesterday, did not prevent my giving to the subject of that communication much earlier attention. After the unexpected result of the last annual meeting of the American Unitarian Association, I could not but feel it to be my duty to consider the subject in every possible relation; and when after an interval, during which I thought it doubtful whether the project of establishing an Agency would be accomplished, the measures that were taken left no doubt on my mind of success, I again gave it most attentive consideration. It is now some months since the Executive Committee, to whom it seemed proper that my decision should be informally communicated, were made acquainted with my inability to accept the appointment of General Agent. They also know the reasons for this decision, and I believe they will acknowledge them to be very strong. To me the difficulties in the way of my accepting the office seem insurmountable. I must therefore respectfully and gratefully decline it.

To the members of the Association to whom I am indebted for this proof of their esteem and confidence, I cannot express my feelings. They are such as I should wish to cherish towards a benefactor and friend. I may be permitted to congratulate them on the success which has attended the efforts to put this Agency on a sure foundation, while in declining the trust which it involves it is a satisfaction to know that I leave it open to one better suited to discharge its duties.

With sincere regard, your friend,

EZRA S. GANNETT.

Other documents, respecting the General Agency, were presented; but the time having arrived for the services of the Church, the consideration of them was postponed till Thursday evening.

At half past seven o'clock the Association proceeded to the Federal Street Church. Prayers were offered by Rev. Pitt Clarke of Norton. The Annual Report of the Executive Committee was read by the Domestic Secretary pro tem.

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## EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT

### OF THE

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

The Executive Committee of the American Unitarian Association, in presenting their Eighth Annual Report, feel that they have reason to congratulate its members, and to recognise the continued favor of Divine Providence. They could not fail to find occasion for joy and gratitude, even if they should advert only to the pleasures and fresh impulses to duty, which the annual meetings of this Institution are so well suited to afford. But when they consider the principles which the Association professes to hold and is pledged to recommend—principles which it cost the Saviour his blood to establish, and which are the basis both of private and public welfare; when they reflect on the measures it has uniformly pursued for accomplishing its objects—measures which, if not always the wisest and most efficient, have certainly been devised in charity for all, and executed without infringing on the rights of any; and when they contem-

plate the success that has thus far attended its efforts—a success, though not equal to the wishes, yet greater than the expectations of its founders and patrons,—your Committee cannot but think that the friends of pure Christianity have signal cause to rejoice together, and to acknowledge with devout thankfulness the goodness of Almighty God. While they would not conceal that, during the past year, much has offered itself to their notice, in respect to the religious condition and prospects of our country, which occasioned them anxiety, and which, they must be permitted to add, imposes it as a sacred duty on all good men and true, to stand up and act together in support of our common faith and hope,—they are happy in being able to preface this account of their humble labors with an expression of their belief, that in no preceding year did the aspects of the cause to which this Association is devoted, appear brighter, on the whole, than they do at the present anniversary.

With regard to the Tract department, your Committee, though conscious of not having fulfilled in every respect the hopes they had cherished, of making their publications all that the various wants of the community might require, believe that they have labored to the extent of their ability to render the press at their command as efficient and useful as circumstances would allow. They have issued 12 tracts, during the past year, amounting to 66,000 copies. Within the same period 11 tracts have been reprinted, amounting to 28,000 copies; making a total of 94,000 copies printed within the last twelve months. For these publications there has been a constant demand, nearly 70,000 copies having been taken from the General Depository since the commencement of the year. Can these numerous mes

sengers of truth be without effect? In this connexion, it may not be improper to mention, that in some sections of the country local associations have been formed for the purpose of printing and distributing tracts of a kind peculiarly suited to the tastes and wants of their immediate neighborhoods.

The Association continues to have a valuable auxiliary in the Unitarian Book and Pamphlet Society. Since our last Anniversary, it has distributed 5,000 tracts — 1000 more than during the preceding year; and its prospects of future usefulness are encouraging. Its rule, not to obtrude its publications on any, but to bestow them only when solicited, is favorably regarded; and scarcely a week passes without application to its Depository by those who know how to appreciate its gifts, and are disposed to employ them in a proper manner.

At no former period could your Committee have given so gratifying a statement respecting the Ministry to the Poor in this city, as they can at the present time. The labors of Dr Tuckerman have not been interrupted by any severe sickness during the past year; they have been attended with increasing success in the field of his usual exertions; and the additional services he has recently performed, under the direction of the Legislature of the State, in visiting the several Pauper establishments in the Commonwealth, and furnishing a Report of the results of his investigations, deserve the gratitude, as they must contribute to the benefit, of the whole community. Two Reports of great interest and value have been communicated by him to your Committee since our last meeting, one of which was published by the Association in December, and the other has just issued from the press.

They are not a mere detail of sufferings relieved, but contain enlarged and philosophic views of the whole subject of pauperism; they are not ephemeral productions, but will be referred to by future writers as able and trustworthy documents. Your Committee have further to state that, perceiving the field of exertion among the poor of this city too large for a single laborer of our denomination, and desirous, at the same time, to relieve Dr Tuckerman of a portion of his arduous duties in this department, in order that he might devote his talents and the fruits of his long experience, in some measure, to the general subjects of pauperism, they undertook, early in the last season, to devise measures for securing the services of additional ministers to the poor. The result has been that Mr Charles F. Barnard, from the Theological School in Cambridge, was engaged in August, for one year; and another gentleman has recently undertaken to prepare himself for the same sphere of usefulness. Mr Barnard now has the sole charge of the chapel in Friend Street, where religious services are performed twice every Sabbath, and where also a Sunday School is in very successful operation. The funds for the support of this valuable ministry have heretofore been contributed chiefly by the ladies of the several Unitarian parishes; but the increased expense occasioned by the multiplication of laborers, will require new sources of pecuniary aid. The Committee have only to remark further, under this head, that the salutary influence of this ministry has not been confined to our metropolis. Not only has it led to similar institutions in England, but our brethren in the faith in New York have, with a praiseworthy liberality

provided the necessary funds for one in that city; and Mr George B. Arnold has been invited to become the first minister; and he will probably accept the appointment.

Applications have continued to be made to this Association for donations in money to encourage the efforts of new societies, or to recruit the exhausted strength of old ones. Some of these your Committee have not complied with, either from want of ability, or because they disliked the principle of doing anything to perpetuate weakness. And here let them remark, once for all, that they deem it far better for any denomination of Christians, that the formation of new societies should be infrequent, and that extremely feeble ones should become extinct, than that the former should begin and the latter continue to exist, without any reasonable hope of being able to sustain themselves independently of assistance from foreign sources. Cases of this sort, however, have not been many during the past year; most of the requests for pecuniary aid having come from places where there seemed to be a strong probability that a little assistance seasonably bestowed would be the means of producing ample power of self-support. To these your Committee have voted such sums as their funds would allow and the exigencies of the respective societies appeared to demand. The societies referred to are in Savannah, Georgia; Buffalo, Oswego, and Trenton, N. Y.; and Farmington, Me. Tracts have also, on urgent solicitation, been bestowed gratuitously in several instances; and it is believed, not without good consequences.

The correspondence carried on by the Executive Department of the Association, during the past year, has

been considerable, though not so extensive as the interests of our denomination require. This deficiency, it is confidently hoped, will be supplied when one shall have taken the office of Domestic Secretary, who is not burdened with the duties of a laborious profession. It cannot but be obvious to all that the operations of the Association must be much facilitated, and the cause of pure religion in a great degree advanced throughout the land, by means of an active and wide correspondence. The Executive, in order to act seasonably and with wisdom, must have prompt and accurate intelligence of the condition and wants of the community; and the community, that it may avail itself of our labors, must have knowledge of our rules, plans and resources. In this place your Committee would gladly insert some extracts from their correspondence showing the religious wants of various parts of the country, and illustrative of the benefits which this Association is fitted to confer; but their limits forbid it.

It is known that the general finances of the Association depend chiefly on the annual subscriptions furnished by Auxiliaries. The number of these Auxiliaries is now about 80. Several new ones have been formed since our last anniversary, though not so many as your Committee had reason to expect; and they take the liberty now, as they have done in former Reports, to urge the importance of the further multiplication of Auxiliaries, till they shall equal the number of our Unitarian congregations. Every such Auxiliary confers a two-fold benefit; it increases the ability of the Parent Institution to extend its sphere of usefulness, and serves at the same time to awaken and perpetuate in the parish to

which it belongs that healthful spirit of religious inquiry, activity, and enterprise, so essential to its general prosperity. Before leaving the subject of Auxiliaries, your Committee may be allowed to advert to those of a wider compass. These can hardly fail to be useful, wherever they do not tend to prevent the formation or diminish the efficiency of those in towns and parishes. They will at least be the means of bringing the friends of Liberal Christianity together as a body from distant places, awakening sympathy, and increasing the zeal of many in the cause of truth and holiness. Take, for example, the State Auxiliary in New Hampshire, formed at Concord about a year ago. There are in that Commonwealth a dozen or more well established Unitarian societies; and several organized associations, each of which will soon be able to support a stated ministry. Besides, there are scattered through the State great numbers of persons, of character and influence, who agree with us in sentiment. But these individuals and societies, with their ministers, are for the most part widely separated from each other. They have little or no intercourse with each other, and are but partially acquainted with the progress of liberal views. Now can there be any doubt that a State Auxiliary, such as has been named, meeting annually in the capital of the Commonwealth, at the time when the Legislature is in session, must produce a wide and salutary effect? Is it not to be hoped that the period is not distant, when such an Auxiliary shall exist in every State of the Union?

It is with satisfaction that your Committee refer to the public meetings of Unitarians that have taken place during the past year in this city, and elsewhere. They

have generally been numerously attended, and in every instance, it is believed, have contributed to further the interests of pure religion. The two meetings of this Association, held where we are now assembled, on the 23d and 25th of October last, were by no means without valuable results; and so far as we can learn, those which have occurred in other places,—as for instance, at Lancaster, Worcester, Lexington, Cambridge, and New Bedford in this State; at Concord and Keene in New Hampshire ; at Hallowell and Augusta in Maine ; at Providence in Rhode Island; at Brattleborough in Vermont; at Washington in the District of Columbia; and in many towns in Connecticut,— were not only gratifying to those who attended them, on account of the good spirit that prevailed, but of great and permanent advantage to the general interests of christian freedom and truth. It is strongly to be desired that these meetings should be still more frequent, and that the ablest and best men should deem it their duty and privilege to appear at them and express their views.

A subject which has, more than any other, interested your Committee of late, is that of the proposed Agency. It will be recollected that after discussion, May 31, 1832, the Association, with but one feeling as to the expediency of the measure, proceeded to the choice of a General Agent ; and on counting the votes it was found that Rev. Mr Gannett of this city was unanimously elected. At the same time, a Committee, consisting of the Executive Committee and three other gentlemen, were appointed to procure the necessary funds ; and they were authorized to pursue such measures as they *might think* expedient for effecting the object. This

Committee was afterwards greatly enlarged; and at one of its meetings two sub-committees were chosen; — the one, consisting of Professor Henry Ware, Jr., Hon. Wm. Sullivan, and Judge Story, to address a Circular to the several Unitarian auxiliaries and parishes throughout the country, soliciting their coöperation; and the other, of whom Judge Rogers was chairman, to undertake the duty of superintending the collection of the funds — a service which devolved chiefly on this gentleman, and which he has performed in a manner that deserves the gratitude of the Association. Nor can your Committee refrain from noticing here the exertions of the young men, belonging to Auxiliaries in this city. It recently occurred to them that they might do something towards augmenting the funds for the Agency. Accordingly, a committee was chosen for this purpose; and, within a few days, they have obtained 1500 dollars, and taken measures for securing a much larger amount.* On the whole, the result has been highly satisfactory. The amount already received or pledged, is about 19,000 dollars; and there still are a few parishes in the city, and a great many out of it, from which additional sums will probably be received. Should our reasonable expectations respecting these be answered, the success of the effort, as regards the pecuniary means for supporting the Agency, may be pronounced complete. There is one topic, however, connected with this subject, which occasions your Committee, as it must the

* The amount is now, July 1st, more than two thousand dollars, *subscribed* in this city. It would be gratifying to see this example *followed* by the young men of other towns.

Association generally, feelings of deep regret. They will only name it;—circumstances have compelled the Agent elect to decline accepting the office. Your Committee will simply add, that, thoroughly convinced as they were, a year ago, of the expediency of this office, they have since found much to strengthen the conviction, and to make them desirous to see it immediately and well filled.

As it regards what may be called the statistics of pure Christianity in this country, your Committee trust they have learned not to attach too much importance to particular facts, whether of an encouraging or disheartening kind. They know well enough the fallaciousness that belongs to the common method of measuring the progress of any set of principles merely by the list of names, — whether of individuals, societies, or agencies,—which usually appear in the Reports of them who are interested in the propagation of those principles. So far, however, as evidence of this character is to be depended on, that which the past year has afforded is gratifying. The Unitarian parishes in this city have not before been in so prosperous a condition as they are, in general, at the present moment, notwithstanding several of them have been severely tried by the absence or sickness of their ministers. Nor is it otherwise, your Committee believe, in regard to the great majority of our congregations in the other sections of the land. Many of them, we know, have received large accessions during the past year; and if a few have dwindled or become extinct, the fact, in relation to the general success of our cause, should be re-

garded much in the same light as we view the stationary or retrograde side-eddies of a noble stream, whose main current is deep, strong, and rapid, and which is sure, sooner or later, to receive again those reluctant waters and bear them onward. Several societies have been newly formed or recently become Unitarian — as for instance, at Leicester, Sutton, Westborough, Southborough, Topsfield, Haverhill, and Easton in this State; at Milford, Windham, and elsewhere in New Hampshire; at Calais, and other places in Maine; at Oswego in New York; at Savannah in Georgia; at Montreal in Canada; at Detroit in Michigan; — most of which have been supplied with preaching. Churches have been erected, or are in a course of building, in many towns; and ministers have been settled at Hardwick, Uxbridge, Hubbardston, Rowe, Pepperell, Taunton, Sandwich, Fitzwilliam, Walpole, Providence, and Richmond. A new periodical has been established at Buffalo, and one also at Billerica; while those of longer standing have, in general, been conducted with unusual ability, and, we are happy to state, are receiving an increased patronage. The past year has been distinguished by the appearance of several books on practical and doctrinal theology of uncommon merit; two of which deserve particular notice—'Discourses' by Dr Channing, and 'Reasons for not believing the Doctrines of Trinitarians,' by Mr Norton; works to which it would be difficult to find their equal in this department of learning in the English language. As regards the Theological School at Cambridge, its condition and prospects are highly encouraging. The number of *Congregational Unitarian* parishes in the United States is about *200*; and if we should include all that reject the

doctrine of the Trinity, and adopt most of our leading views in religion, the number of societies would probably be more than 2000.

But, as we have already intimated, too much importance should not be attached to facts of this sort. There are signs of the times of a much more satisfactory character. What is the sure tendency of the discussions now going on in the denominations of Christians most opposed to us? What are the actual convictions, concealed indeed in many cases, yet determinate and fixed, of a vast majority of educated minds in this country? What are the spirit, impress, and tone of almost all the respectable literature in the land? What, in a word, are the direction and force of the great current of public opinion? Is it setting in favor of those systems of theology, which had their origin in ages of darkness, and which for centuries have shaped the popular faith? No one, in his senses, will pretend it. The great movement of the general mind in this country is towards free and liberal views in religion. Though gradual, it is sure as the course of the sun. Evils indeed, your committee are aware, accompany this change, as is the case with all considerable changes from bondage and error to freedom and truth. They need not be told of the increased virulence of bigotry on the one hand; nor of the spread of infidelity on the other hand; nor of more or less doubt, discontent, contention, breaking up of parishes, and the like, almost everywhere—these they know full well; they lament them; they do all in their power to lessen them. But in what light, after all, should these evils be viewed? They are to be looked upon as, in a measure, necessary—as inseparable from a state of progress from one degree of

improvement to another ; and they must be met and endured — so met and endured as that they shall become tributary to good in the end. At the same time, they are to be regarded as only incidental and temporary ; and, moreover, as of very little moment, in comparison with the vast benefits to be wrought out, under God, in the course of events. In view, then, of the sure and steady advancement that is making in this country towards enlightened and just sentiments on the most important of all subjects, religion, it becomes us to rejoice and be grateful. And not only so. We must labor to forward and direct it. Every one can do something—this Association, as it has done, so it can still do, much. A weight of responsibleness rests on us which we cannot throw off ; a responsibleness, may it not be said, of a peculiar character. We not only have, as we think, the religion of Jesus as it came pure from its divine source, but, as a denomination, we seem to occupy the medium — happy though it be, yet imposing fearful obligations — between most hurtful extremes. Our position is indeed a difficult one ; but is it not, too, a glorious one, even that of christian truth, freedom, charity, and righteousness ? These we are called on not only to profess, but to practice and recommend. Let us be equal to the demand. Is ours the true faith by which, as individuals, we can live, by which we can die ? let us cling to it — let us cherish it as our dearest treasure. Is ours the religion which human nature craves, and in which is the only sure hope of the regeneration of our race ? let us labor incessantly, and pray most fervently, that it may have free course and be glorified.

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After the reading of the Report, Dr BANCROFT, the President, briefly addressed the meeting. He said, that the facts which had been presented, called for lively gratitude to Almighty God, without whose blessing our efforts were vain, but who commanded man to labor for the promotion of truth and the advancement of piety. Dr B. suggested several weighty considerations which should excite us to greater activity in this holy cause.

Rev. Mr PARKMAN moved the acceptance of the Report. He believed it would meet the hearty concurrence of all present. No one could hear it without perceiving the arduous duties and cares of the Executive Committee, and the fidelity and judgment with which they had been sustained. He would congratulate the Association on the success which had attended the Tract Department, and the ministry to the poor. He commended the course pursued in relation to feeble churches, and spoke at some length on the importance of reviving the ancient spirit of New England,— the spirit of courage, independence, and trust in God which animated the hearts of our Fathers. He was no friend to the practice of dividing and weakening churches, for the sake of promoting Unitarian views, or any other views, and for one, was glad that the Executive Committee of the Association had the same ideas on this subject with himself.

FRANCIS O. WATTS, Esq. of this city, said that he rose to speak on a subject of deep interest to every Unitarian present. I refer, said he, to the General Agency. It is recorded in the proceedings of this Association, that we have seen fit to establish the office. I recollect, sir, and you recollect the spirit with which this

purpose was taken up at its commencement. It was one on which every heart felt, and felt deeply. I remember some time since, at a meeting in the Old South Church, in favor of the Cherokees, it was announced in the course of the evening, that a favorable decision had been made by the Supreme Court,— and a thrill of joy pervaded the whole assembly. A similar emotion was felt, sir, on this occasion last year, when it was whispered through this church that the meeting in the Vestry had resolved upon the appointment of a man, who should devote himself to the great cause in which we are engaged. I recollect the earnestness and devotion which were witnessed here at that time,— I recollect, sir, the feelings with which we united with you in supplications to God for his blessing upon our enterprise, — I recollect the strong emotions with which I left the house, feeling that it was good, very good to have been at the meeting, — and I recollect what has since been done. And am I now asked, if I am satisfied ? No, sir, I am not satisfied. Satisfied! when above a year ago, we had such statements of the wants of our country, of the opening fields of labor in the mighty West, of the souls hungering for the bread of life, who call upon us for aid, — and we have done so little! Sir, I am grateful for what has been done, but I am not satisfied. I cannot be. Hundreds and thousands have gone down to an unblessed grave,— have appeared to give their last account before their Maker,— and our Agent is not yet sent abroad,— we have done, compared with what we ought to do, nothing, — and for one, sir, I want more. *I want to* see your Agent making a commencement on *those fields* which are already white for the harvest.

And why, sir? We call ourselves the American Unitarian Association. We have, then, a national responsibility. Every American Unitarian, wherever he may be, has claims upon us. If we can do anything, by the service of an Agent, for his welfare, we are bound in duty to do it. Another reason, sir. You know well, the opposition that is made to the views of truth, which we hold. Sir, it is made in ignorance. We are bound to remove that ignorance. Let in light, and the prejudices will be destroyed. It was but the other day, two individuals were conversing on the religious opinions of a third,—and one said, 'he is a Unitarian.' 'No,' replied the other, 'he is not a Unitarian,—he is pious.' Owe we nothing, sir, to minds infected with such delusions? Shall we not attempt to show our fellow-men, at least, that Unitarianism and piety are not terms to be placed in opposition? Again, sir, our New England brethren, scattered throughout the whole extent of our land, have claims upon us. New England enterprise has carried New England Unitarians to every part of our country. In many instances, they are friendless and alone. Their hearts long for the sympathy which they enjoyed at their native home. We ought to hold them in remembrance, to bear them on our hearts and in our prayers; and not only so, but to go to them, by our missionaries, by our publications, as well as by our wishes.

But it is objected that this purpose is sectarian. Not so in the bad sense of the word. No more so than all our religious institutions,—our clergymen,—our weekly worship. Still it is said by some, that the purpose *seems plausible,—they* feel an interest in it,—but the

it is asked, is it not like the proceedings of the Orthodox? Sir, that is not the question. Is it good or bad? is it expedient or inexpedient? is it the work of God or of man?—this is what we are to ask. For my part, sir, I feel no objection to a good thing, because it is approved by an Orthodox brother. If the Orthodox are in advance of us, I am willing to follow them, under certain restrictions. While they follow our Lord, I rejoice to follow them. But when they leave him, I follow them no longer. Let this be called a missionary enterprise. What then? Sir, who was the first Christian Missionary? He, whom the Father sent into the world. Then, the apostles—then, the noble army of martyrs—then, all the brave spirits who have toiled and suffered for the truth of God and the cause of Christ;—they have been, and they must have been missionaries. And let no one object to this purpose, that it is a missionary purpose. Let it be supported. Let it go on with the blessing of God, and the devotion of earnest hearts. Sir, I have taken up too much of your time, and I ask pardon of you and this assembly.

Rev. Jason Whitman, of Saco, Me., said that he felt the importance of supporting Unitarianism, because it was a medium between dangerous errors. We believe that Orthodox Christians are in possession of many great truths, but hold them in combination with hurtful errors. They have gone to an unwarrantable and dangerous extreme. Others have gone in an opposite direction, to an extreme still more injurious. This imposes a great responsibility on Unitarians. Who have been most prominent in advocating the principles of free inquiry? Unitarians. But some who assume the dis-

tinctive name of Free Inquirers, have arrived at pernicious results, not by their free inquiry, but by their disregard of the correct principles of evidence. Their errors must be met, and they can be met to the greatest advantage by Unitarians, because they are the friends of sound and rational free inquiry themselves. So, too, with religious liberty. The advocates of this have gone to great extremes. Some think that religious liberty is nothing but the liberty to be irreligious. We are in danger from this spirit,—the spirit of nullification and misrule carried into religion. But by whom can it be successfully resisted, but by the sincere friends of true religious liberty? In like manner, the views of God maintained by Unitarians are often perverted. When called to the bed-side of the dying, we are asked if there can be any hope in the mercy of God, for the departing spirit. We announce the love, the forgiving grace of our heavenly Father. But there is danger even in this. Some minds are led to dwell so much on the mercy of God as to lose sight of the justice of his character,—the claims of his law. We are to labor, then, to preserve the truth, in the midst of these extremes. Let us feel our responsibility. Let us endeavor to make men more devout, more holy, more charitable, as well as more zealous, by the influences of the blessed truths which it is our privilege to hold.

Rev. John Pierpont then offered the following resolution:

'*Resolved*, That in the judgment of this Association, Unitarian Christianity is a form of religion which harmonizes with the moral nature of man, and is adequate to the religious wants of the human soul in all its scenes of trial, and in *all portions of its being.*'

In support of this resolution, Mr P. said that he believed Unitarianism harmonized with the religious nature of man—with the sentiments and feelings with which he was endowed by his Maker; for it satisfactorily answers those questions which are asked by the human soul with the deepest interest. For instance, will God, as my Judge, forgive me on repentance without any other offering? The moral nature of man craves a God and Judge, who will turn his ear to the voice of penitence and prayer—not a God, who will say there is no mercy, and you need none, because the debt is cancelled by the sufferings of another. Hear the parable of the Prodigal Son. It is a summary of pure and uncorrupted Christianity. The wretched wanderer returns to his Father's house. He goes with the deepest contrition and remorse. 'I am not worthy to be called thy Son.' He throws himself upon his Father's mercy. And what does his Father do? Refuse to admit him? Does he say that if the elder Son will submit to an ignominious death, and be hung up on the post of the door, the penitent may then cross the threshold and enter under his Father's roof? No. He goes out to meet him. He welcomes his return and accepts his repentance. This is the way with God. And this is what the deepest feelings in our nature require.

Still further, Unitarian Christianity is adequate to the wants of the soul in its greatest trials. What are they? Sorrow. See how it supported 'the man of sorrows.' Poverty. Hear the testimony of those who have labored for and with the poor, and you will learn what it can do for them. Death. It is adequate to this *great trial.* It will go with us through the dark valley.

Nothing can be more false than the assertion, that it will do to live by, but not to die by. Sir, a religion that is good in life, we might argue from the nature of man and the perfections of God, would be good in death. But we are not confined to this argument. We have facts. We have seen its influence in the hour of mortal agony. I was acquainted with a person myself, who was once an infidel. Under the preaching of Mr Buckminster, his attention was excited to the subject of Christianity. He examined its evidence — he studied its doctrines— and became a firm believer in it, as understood and explained by his revered pastor. He adorned his faith by the beauty of an exemplary, consistent, and useful life. I saw him on the bed of death. In that dread hour, which divides eternity from time, I asked him if he was supported by the faith which he had professed. Pausing, and with accents broken with deep emotion, he replied, 'Sir, I thank God, that he has permitted me to become acquainted with the truths of religion, cherished by Unitarians. They have been my support in life and are my hope in death. I cling to them as to the refuge of my soul, and I die in peace.'

Mr President, I will say no more. One such voice from the bed of death is a refutation of the popular saying, that we can live by Unitarianism, but cannot die by it.

Rev. Mr Gannett made a few animating remarks on the duty of Unitarians at the present crisis. They are called upon to take a deeper interest in their views of Christian doctrine, Christian character, and Christian hope. While changes are taking place in our established *ecclesiastical relations*, and the usual means of religion

changing their form, let us be alive to our imperative and solemn responsibility.

After Mr Gannett closed his remarks, the Association, according to a previous vote, adjourned to meet on Thursday evening, at 7 o'clock.

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At 7 o'clock on Thursday evening the Association met in the Berry-street Vestry, Dr Bancroft in the chair. After prayers by the President, and the reading of the records of the last meeting, the Association proceeded to the business left unfinished on Tuesday evening. Judge Rogers read the following Report.

REPORT RESPECTING THE FUNDS FOR THE AGENCY.

The Committee of the American Unitarian Association who were appointed to 'make arrangements and provide means for carrying on the Agency,' beg leave respectfully to Report: —

That from June to September of the last year, your Committee held several meetings to consult upon the best manner of performing their trust, but on account of the absence of many of our friends from the city, and the danger of impending disease, it was not thought expedient to bring the subject before the public at that time. In September, they nominated Committees in the parishes of this city, in most of the counties of this Commonwealth, and in some other places, and addressed to them a circular. The Committees of the city pa-

rishes were invited to meet with the General Committee, when it was resolved to call a public meeting for the purpose of addressing the body of Liberal Christians in behalf of this undertaking. Such a meeting was accordingly held on the evening of the twentythird of October, and another by adjournment, on that of the twentyfifth, in the Federal Street Church; and the claims of this object upon the friends of Unitarian Christianity were presented to crowded and respectable assemblies, by Judge Story, Professors Ware and Palfrey, Rev. Messrs Brownson, May, and Walker, Mr Rogers, and Hon. William Sullivan; when on motion of the gentleman last named, it was unanimously

'*Resolved*, That in the opinion of this meeting, the establishment of an Agency of the American Unitarian Association is a measure so important to the best interests of Liberal Christianity, that it has strong claims for aid and support upon our religious Societies, and upon individual Christians; and that we cordially approve the intended application of the Association to our several parishes in this city and throughout the country.'

The Committees in the parishes in Boston and in a few places in the country, then proceeded to solicit subscriptions in aid of the funds for the support of the Agency. From peculiar circumstances of delicacy in the case, no application has yet been made to the Rev. Mr Gannett's Society.

It will be remembered that at the last annual meeting a few subscriptions were taken. Most of these are included in, and make part of donations and subscriptions in the several societies. The remainder, not so included, are as follows:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Hon. Stephen C. Phillips—donation - - | $500 | |
| Rev. Henry Ware, Jr., for self and others, $100 per annum, - | 500 | |
| Hon. Joseph Story, $20 " " - - | 100 | |
| Rev. Aaron Bancroft, $10 " " - - | 50 | |
| | | $1,150 |

Subscriptions have been received from the several societies in this City to the following amount.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Twelfth Cong. Society, Rev. Mr Barrett's, | $2,177 | |
| New North Society, Rev. Mr Parkman's, | 1,975 | |
| New South Society, Rev. Mr Young's, - | 1,928 | |
| Brattle Street Society, - - - - - | 1,921 | |
| Purchase Street Society, Rev. Mr Ripley's, | 1,744 | |
| South Cong. Society, Rev. Mr Motte's, - | 1,441 | |
| Hollis Street Society, Rev. Mr Pierpont's, | 1,360 | |
| Second Church, - - - - - - | 867 | |
| King's Chapel, Rev. Mr Greenwood's, - | 710 | |
| West Church, Dr Lowell's, - - - | 310 | |
| First Church, Rev. Mr Frothingham's, - | 245 | |
| Hawes Place Church, S. Boston, Rev. Mr Capen's, | 77 | |
| Individuals, not included above, - - | 350 | |
| | | 15,135 |

About one half of this sum, consisting of the donations and the first year's subscriptions, will be payable this year; and the remainder within five years, by annual instalments.

The following contributions, chiefly for the present year, from societies and individuals out of the city, have been already paid.

| | |
|---|---|
| Rev. Charles Brooks's Society, Hingham, | $ 40 00 |
| " Convers Francis's Society, Watertown, | 103 00 |
| Ladies of Rev. C. Sewall's Society, Danvers, | 20 00 |
| Rev. Mr Eden's Society, Canton, - - | 17 89 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Rev. C. Wellington's Society, Templeton, | 30 00 | |
| Mrs Sophia Bronson, by Rev. C. Brooks, | 5 00 | |
| First Parish in Roxbury, Rev. Mr Putnam's, | 51 00 | |
| Rev. Mr Whitney's Parish in Roxbury, - | 30 00 | |
| First Parish in Dorchester, Rev. Dr Harris's, | 51 00 | |
| " " in Medfield, Rev. Mr Kendall's, | 23 00 | |
| " " in Dedham, Rev. Mr Lamson's, | 30 00 | |
| Dr Richmond's Society, Dorchester, - - | 13 00 | |
| Ten donors in Hallowell, - - - | 110 00 | |
| Some Ladies, by Rev. H. Ware, Jr - - | 15 00 | |
| Individuals in Concord, - - - - | 11 00 | |
| Worcester, Dr Bancroft's and Mr H.'s Society, | 255 00 | |
| First Parish in Groton, Rev. Mr Robinson's, | 21 40 | |
| Providence Auxiliary, - - - - | 57 37 | |
| Rev. Mr Allen, of Bolton, - - - | 5 00 | |
| Sherburne, Rev. Mr Clarke's Society, - | 10 32 | |
| Lexington, Rev. Mr Briggs' Society, - - | 40 21 | |
| Marlborough, Rev. Mr Alden's Society, - | 20 00 | |
| Framingham, First Parish, - - - | 44 00 | |
| | | 1,003 19 |

The sums subscribed by other societies and individuals out of the city have not yet been officially made known to the Committee, except the following:

| | |
|---|---|
| New Bedford, Rev. Mr Dewey's Society, $140 per annum, for 10 years, - - | 1,400 |
| Springfield, Rev. Mr Peabody's Society, within five years, by annual instalments, - | 873 |
| Dr Ripley, of Concord, $5 annually for life, | |
| Lexington, Rev. Mr Briggs's Society, the interest of $320 annually, for five years, - | 96 |
| An individual of Rev. Mr Hedge's society, West Cambridge, $5 per annum, - - | 25 |
| An individual of Rev. Mr Putnam's Society, Roxbury, $5 per annum, - - - | 25 |
| Washington, D. C., Rev. Mr Palfrey's Society, | 30 |
| | 2,449 |

After the Boston Parish Committees had finished their operations in their respective societies, a number of young men belonging to the Auxiliary Associations in the city, thought that some persons might yet remain who had not been requested to contribute, and a few others who would add something more to their former liberality. With a deep sense of the importance of our undertaking, and a great interest in its success, they decided that so good a cause was worthy of another effort; and within the last few days they have been actively engaged in gathering in the scattered sums which had been left by those who went before them. The result of their labors has been to add to our funds the sum of $1,500, which will probably be still further increased by their persevering efforts.* They have also addressed Circulars to the young men of the other considerable towns in New England. This is only one good work among many, in which these young men are known to be employed. Your Committee are not permitted by the limits of this Report to express all the feelings of approbation which must arise in the breast of every one present. But they cannot but rejoice in these pledges, that when we are called from our labors, we are to be succeeded by hearts more warmly interested, and hands still more active in the cause of truth and human happiness, than ours have ever been.

Your Committee have taken pains to communicate to the friends of Liberal Christianity generally, the facts and reasons which show this measure to be an important one. Besides distributing copies of the Circulars, Reports of

* See the Note on page 16. The sums collected by the young men are included in those set against the parishes to which the contributors respectively belong.

the meetings, and other papers respecting the Agency, in places where aid might be expected, they requested three gentlemen to visit different parts of New England as the Agents of the Association, to press this subject upon the attention of our friends. Rev. Moses G. Thomas visited several parts of Maine, and in his letter dated February 15, 1833, after some local information respecting the sums to be expected there, (calculated at $1,360,) he remarks; 'such is the result as far as I can judge from the assurances which I received, and I doubt not but that the Association will receive somewhere between ten and fifteen hundred dollars.'

Rev. Alonzo Hill, who visited the county of Worcester and some of the western counties, in his letter dated April 3d, writes as follows. 'I have seen nearly all the liberal clergy in this county, and have had communication with some in the county of Franklin, Hampshire, &c. Our own Society has attended to the subject of the Agency, and has manifested a good spirit. They have preferred making occasional contributions towards the object to raising a fund. As the first fruits of their liberality we shall be able to send you between 250 and $300. Sterling, Lancaster, Bolton, Fitchburg, Templeton, Petersham and Barre, will be able to contribute from 30 to 60 or $70 each, a year. They all intend to take contributions in the Spring. Something more than what I have named will probably be gathered from individuals, and from some of the smaller societies.'

In another letter dated May 6, Mr Hill writes; 'I have seen nearly all the clergymen in this county, and on Connecticut River. I met the Franklin Association last Tuesday at Deerfield. They compose about *twelve societies.* I stated to them my object, and

found them altogether favorably disposed towards it. They promise to pay at least fifty dollars a year, so long as the Agency shall be needed. They recommend that the Agent commence a quarterly publication giving an account of his doings, and other statistical matters. They pledge themselves to get subscribers enough to pay for the publication, and their full proportion for the support of an Agent. The idea of such a work strikes me favorably. Of our own Association I have already informed you. You may safely calculate upon a growing interest in the subject. You may depend on my efforts to do all in my power.'

Rev. Mr Muzzy, who visited several parts of the county of Middlesex, in his letter of a recent date gives the following statement. 'The measure has been almost universally approved of, and in a few instances sums have been already advanced to promote it. Pledges have been given to the amount of from $500 to $600, in those Parishes from which returns have now reached me. As many individuals have preferred paying annual contributions rather than donations to this object, I have received comparatively little, only about $140 in this way. There are several towns in the northern and western sections of the county, whose religious condition calls loudly for the services of a temporary preacher, and who are looking with much anxiety for your Agent. These I have found to contribute most heartily to the support of that office. I would add, that much good may be done in many towns in this county, and I presume in all where there are Auxiliaries to the Parent Association, by an annual visit of the General Agent for the purpose of *strengthening* such Auxiliaries, and awakening thereby

a deeper interest in the support and diffusion of Liberal Christianity. These visits would do much to produce and deepen in the minds of our brethren a sense of the duty and importance of doing something in aid of the general interests and public institutions of our faith.'

Your Committee feel that the Association is under great obligation to the gentlemen who have visited different parts of the country, for their faithful services. They are also encouraged by the good wishes for our success which they hear on all sides, and by the promises which have been given by many, to do something hereafter. They cannot but express a grateful sense of the liberality which has been manifested in several of the societies in this city. In some of them the amount obtained has been greater than they had dared to expect. A generous contribution will probably be received from one Society that has not as yet had an opportunity to act on this subject. Additional subscriptions are hoped from some that have not done their proportional part. On the whole, the prospects in regard to pecuniary means are highly gratifying. The entire sum already subscribed does not vary much from $19,737; 15,135 of which have been obtained in this city. If the exertions of our friends in the country should realize our hopes and expectations, a sufficient amount will be raised for the support of an Agent for many years, and we may then congratulate ourselves upon our complete success, and anticipate the enjoyment of the great benefits of a measure so important to the advancement of liberal and enlightened views of Christianity.

All which is respectfully submitted for the Committee.

JOHN GRAY ROGERS

The above Report was accepted. The Executive Committee then presented a Report containing the outline of a plan for the General Agency, which was read, discussed, and with some amendments adopted. This Report, as amended, follows.

### REPORT OF A PLAN FOR THE GENERAL AGENCY.

It having been ascertained that the necessary funds for the support of a General Agency will be raised, it becomes the duty of the Executive Committee to ask instructions of the American Unitarian Association, by which they may be guided in such superintendence of the Agency as it may be proper for them to maintain. At the same time, as the subject has been for some months under their attention, it may be expected that they should present an outline of the service, to which in their judgment the Agent should devote himself, with whatever other remarks may be necessary in laying the whole subject before the Association for their final action. The Committee therefore beg leave to present the following Report for consideration.

It must be obvious to every one, that the creation of this office, not having been meditated when the Association was formed, renders an amendment of the Constitution necessary. The Committee recommend that all the duties which are at present divided between the *Foreign* and the *Domestic Secretaries* be assigned to the Agent, who shall have the title of *General Secretary*, but that another office be created, to be filled by an *Assistant Secretary*, who shall, in case of the sickness or absence of the General Secretary, perform those

duties of a Recording and Corresponding Secretary, which require immediate attention. They advise that the 5th article of the Constitution be amended by striking out all the words between 'Vice Presidents and a Treasurer,' and substituting these words, 'a General Secretary, who shall have the care of all the business and interests of the Association under the control of the Executive Committee, an Assistant Secretary who, in case of the absence or sickness of the General Secretary, shall perform such duties of a Recording and Corresponding Secretary, as may require immediate attention.'

In assigning the duties of this office, the Committee believe that neither they nor the Association can do anything more than give some general views, while in the execution of his trust much must be left to his judgment, subject to the advice of the Executive Committee.

According to the amendment of the Constitution which they have just proposed, all the duties that now devolve on the Foreign and the Domestic Secretaries will be committed to the General Secretary. He will keep the records of the Association and of the Executive Committee, will conduct all the correspondence at home and abroad, will make preparations for the annual and extraordinary meetings of the Association, and in a word will take upon himself all the service which is commonly expected of the Secretary of such an institution.

Besides this general care, he will particularly attend to the publication of the Tracts. It will be his duty to procure and present to the Committee for their appro-

bation suitable Tracts, and to see that they are properly printed and distributed. He will, as shall be found best, either assume the care of the distribution which is now the business of the General Agents, or give them such directions and assistance as he may deem proper.

In this connexion the Committee may state, that foreseeing the necessity of an office in a central part of the City for the use of the General Secretary, they have hired a room of convenient size and easy access, in Washington Street opposite School Street, (over Russell, Odiorne, and Co's Bookstore,) at which the business of the Association may be conducted, and the meetings of the Executive Committee be held.

In promoting the interests of the Association, besides what may be properly styled its business, the Committee think the labors of the General Secretary may be arranged under four divisions.

1. He should make it a special object to form and strengthen Auxiliary Associations. He should, if possible, form one in every Unitarian Society, revive those that are declining, and by correspondence, and attendance at the meetings of these Auxiliaries, endeavor to give them vigor and permanency. Through these Auxiliaries, as well as by individual subscriptions, particularly those of life-members, he should obtain as far as practicable an increase of the funds of the Association.

2. He should, by conversation and writing, endeavor to spread an intelligent and warm interest in Christian truth among Unitarians. The Committee believe that he may do great good in this way. By free communication with those who hold generally the same opinions with himself, he may lead them better to un-

derstand and more highly to value their religious sentiments, and may inspire a more solemn purpose, both to recommend them by their lives, and to diffuse them by coöperation in measures for this end.

3. He should exert himself to introduce our views of the gospel and of Christian character among those who now regard them with indifference and hostility. By writing and by visiting, by talking and by preaching he should spread a knowledge of these views, abate prejudice, persuade the skeptical to believe, and the ignorant or misinformed to entertain more just notions, and in every way which a sound judgment will approve must increase the number of enlightened and practical Christians.

4. He must give his attention, so far as may be consistent with the more immediate duties of his office, to all those institutions and measures with which is connected the success of pure Christianity. The increase of students at the Theological School, the supply of destitute churches, the circulation of our periodical works, and whatever other means may seem to him to be essential or conducive to the spread of true religion, should receive such share of his thought and time as may be given to them without neglecting his other more strictly official duties.

It will be perceived that the Committee expect the Agent to devote his whole time to the Association. This is their expectation, for they believe that the duties of this office are more than the most able and diligent individual can fully discharge. They cannot indeed be fixed within any limits, if we regard either the nature of the enterprise, the importance of the work, the extent of the field of operation, or the variety of

the means that may be used. The incumbent should give to it all the time which is not demanded by personal and domestic duties.

It must also have been observed that the General Secretary is expected to preach. The Committee think that he should preach whenever opportunity occurs on Sundays and on other days, and if they did not believe that he will have more calls of this nature than he can answer, they should say that he ought to seek opportunities. On all extraordinary occasions, and on a Sunday to a congregation who need such assistance, this service may be rendered gratuitously, but when requested to supply the pulpit of a society able to pay for preaching he should receive the usual compensation, which he should place to the credit of the Association.

It will farther be seen that the General Secretary must take frequent and long journeys. The Committee think that he should spend from three to six months of the year at a distance from Boston. An annual tour through New England, and an annual visit to the State of New York, will probably be expedient. A journey to the Southern or the Western States, which must necessarily occupy at least three months, should also be taken every two or three years. Circumstances must determine what part of the country shall be visited at a particular time, and at what places the principal stay shall be made. In the cities or large towns of the South and West, it may be proper for him to remain several weeks. His distant journeys should be so arranged, that he may be in Boston at the anniversary, and at any other public meeting of the Association.

It should be the duty of the General Secretary to re-

port to the Executive Committee at every monthly meeting, either in person or by writing, the measures which he has adopted during the previous month, or which he is then pursuing. And he should take no journey which would detain him from home for a longer time than a fortnight without the consent of the Committee.

After this outline of the service which may be required of the new officer, the Association will be prepared to receive the suggestions of the Committee respecting his salary, which, like all the other parts of this Report, they would merely offer for discussion. [The remainder of this paragraph was so amended by the Association, that its original form could not be retained. The Association voted that the salary of the General Secretary should be fixed at $1500, exclusively of all expenses, and adopted the suggestion of the Executive Committee, that] if it should at any time be thought best that the office of the General Secretary be the General Depository, and the present business of the General Agents be transacted there, the present salary of the General Agents might be allowed to a permanent clerk.

In respect to the funds which have been, or may be, contributed to this object, it will appear from a Report which has been offered by the Committee to whom this business was entrusted, that about one half of the amount secured has been in the form of annual subscriptions for five years, a small part in annual subscriptions for a shorter period, and the rest in donations. Over that portion which is in annual subscriptions we can of course have no control; the other part the Committee recommend should be funded, that the interest, and if at any future time the principal be re-

quired, this also may be appropriated to the support of the Agency.

The Committee have now expressed, with as much brevity as was consistent with clearness, their views on the duties, responsibleness, and compensation of the General Secretary. They submit them for examination, in the hope that the whole subject will be thoroughly canvassed, and that the result will furnish them or their successors in office with definite principles and rules by which they may be governed in their future proceedings.

The Committee cannot refrain from one farther expression of opinion on this subject. While they are more and more convinced of its importance, and believe now more strongly than ever before, that the establishment of this office will be productive of great good, they deem it an act of justice to him who may be chosen to fill the place, to prevent the disappointment which might arise from too sanguine expectations of visible and notorious effects. A large part of the good which the General Secretary will do, can never be described in an Annual Report, nor be represented by numbers. The Committee look to the diffusion of influences which must work silently, rather than with noise, and with less of violence than of permanent effect. They do not therefore either expect or desire that the Secretary shall spread before them on each anniversary a report of undertakings, all of which have been crowned with brilliant success. They will be satisfied if they see him busily and heartily engaged in promoting the objects of his appointment, and will trust the results to the *force of those* everlasting principles of the divine gov-

ernment, which forbid that the consecration of talent and labor to the best interests of mankind should be fruitless.

All which is respectfully submitted by the Committee.

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The Association proceeded to the choice of Officers for the ensuing year. Rev. Alonzo Hill and Rev. George Putnam of Roxbury, were appointed to collect and count the votes. The following Officers were elected.

OFFICERS

OF THE

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

1833 — 34.

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PRESIDENT.

Rev. AARON BANCROFT, D. D., of Worcester, Mass.

VICE PRESIDENTS.

Hon. JOSEPH STORY, Mass.
" JOSEPH LYMAN, "
" WILLIAM SULLIVAN, "
" CHARLES H. ATHERTON, N. H.
" STEPHEN LONGFELLOW, Me.
HENRY WHEATON, Esq. N. Y.
JAMES TAYLOR, Esq. Penn.
HENRY PAYSON, Esq. Md.

Hon. WILLIAM CRANCH, D. C.
MARTIN L. HURLBURT, Esq. Penn.
HON. SAMUEL S. WILDE, Mass.
" SAMUEL HOAR, Jr. "
TIMOTHY FLINT, Esq. Ohio.

DIRECTORS.

Rev. JAMES WALKER,
" EZRA S. GANNETT.
" ALEXANDER YOUNG.

Rev. HENRY WARE, Jr. *Foreign Secretary.*
" SAMUEL BARRETT, *Domestic Secretary.*
HENRY RICE, Esq. *Treasurer.*
Rev. CHARLES C. SEWALL, *General Agent.*

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## CONSTITUTION

OF THE

## AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

1. THE name of this Association shall be THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

2. The objects of this Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity throughout our country.

3. Unitarian Christians throughout the United States shall be invited to unite and coöperate with this Association.

4. An annual subscription of one dollar shall constitute a person a member so long as such subscription shall be paid, *and a subscription of* $30 shall constitute a person a member *for life.*

5. The officers shall be a President, fifteen Vice Presidents, a Secretary for foreign correspondence who shall be styled the Foreign Secretary, a Secretary for correspondence within the United States and for keeping the records of the Association, who shall be called the Domestic Secretary, a Treasurer, and three Directors.

6. The Directors, Secretaries, and Treasurer, shall constitute the Executive Committee, who shall meet once in each month, and shall have the direction of the funds and operations of the Association.

7. An annual meeting shall be held at such time and place, as the Executive Committee shall deem advisable, of which due notice shall be given, and at which officers shall be chosen, reports be made, and any other business be transacted, which may come before the Association.

8. The Executive Committee shall have power to fill any vacancies which may occur among the officers between any two annual meetings.

9. Any amendments of this Constitution shall be proposed at one annual meeting, and may be accepted at the next anniversary, if two thirds of the members present be in favor of such amendments.

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Vote passed by the Executive Committee, September 23, 1826, as amended March 18, 1830.

'*Resolved*, That every member of the Association be entitled to one copy of every tract *of the first and second series* published by the Association *during the year for which his subscription is entered.*'

Vote of the Executive committee, passed January 4, 1826,

'*Voted*, That no society be recognised as auxiliary to this Association, the terms of subscription to which are less than those required in the Constitution of this Association.'

Vote passed by the Executive Committee, June 20, 1833.

'*Voted*, That the 4th Article of the Constitution be so construed, that any one who shall pay $30 for the General Agency of the American Unitarian Association, either at once, or by annual instalments within five years, shall be considered a life member.'

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## CLERGYMEN MEMBERS FOR LIFE.

The following Clergymen have been made members for life of the American Unitarian Association, by the donation of thirty dollars or more, principally from ladies of their respective societies.

Abbot, Abiel.
Alden, Seth.
Bancroft Aaron, D. D.
Barrett, Samuel.
Bartlett, John.
Bascom, Ezekiel L.
Brazer, John.
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